03
PlayStation Magazine
EXCLUSIVE DEMO CD EVERY MONTH
ALL NEW PLAYABLE DEMOS: MMV3, MONSTER TRUCKS & PORSCHE CHALLENGE
PlayStation
Official UK
PlayStation Magazine
No. 20
BIGGEST ISSUE EVER!
G-POLICE
'It's going to be the Christmas Number One.' Find out why
REVIEWED:
CARNAGE HEART
NEED FOR SPEED 2
ALLIED GENERAL
BUBBLE BOBBLE 2
EPIDEMIC
VANDAL-HEARTS
PSYCHIC FORCE
SPIDER
SOCCER '97
SWAGMAN
NHL POWERPLAY HOCKEY '96
TRANSPORT TYCOON
K-1 THE ARENA FIGHTERS
ACTUA SOCCER CLUB EDITION
WCW VS THE WORLD
SUPER PUZZLE FIGHTER II
DONKEY KONG COUNTRY ON THE PLAYSTATION?
Hot news just in!
HEART ATTACK!
Vandal-Hearts and Carnage Heart reviewed!
THE BEAUTIFUL GAMES
A complete history of footie videogames – and we reveal the best!
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WHAT'S ON THIS MONTH'S CD?

Not just one for the road this month, but in fact three: the final version of *Porsche Challenge*, a two-player *MMV3* demo and the great *Monster Trucks*. Plus *Excalibur*. And they're all playable!

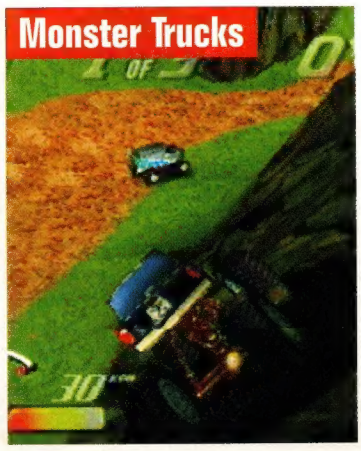
EXCLUSIVE DEMOS 3 Vol 2
MICRO MACHINES V3
PLAYABLE: Codemasters' dinky racer is here at last. Give it a whirl
MONSTER TRUCKS
PLAYABLE: Bump across vale and hill in a four-wheel drive truck
PORSCHE CHALLENGE
PLAYABLE: Test drive one of the finest racing games we've seen yet
EXCALIBUR 2555AD
PLAYABLE: Slash your way through Telstar's answer to Tomb Raider
PlayStation
PAL
Disc 03: Vol 2
Future
PlayStation Magazine

MMV3 — **Playable**
Three-dee, two-player and one hell of a game. Hilarious small-scale fun.

Excalibur — **Playable**
Last month you witnessed the *Tomb Raider*-clone. Now play it!

Monster Trucks — **Playable**
Yet another great racing game from the Psygnosis stables.

Porsche Challenge — **Playable**
Your chance to play the finished version of in all its glory.



A-Z Geographers – An Apology

In issue 16 of *Official UK PlayStation Magazine* we featured an article entitled 'A-Z of PlayStation'. This article was illustrated with the logo of A-Z Geographers Limited and also reproduced that company's mapping. This reproduction occurred without A-Z's permission and the staff of*Official PlayStation* and Future Publishing management would like to take this opportunity to apologise unreservedly to A-Z Geographers for this unauthorised reproduction. We would like to assure A-Z Geographers Limited that it will not occur again.

Rob Pegley **Lam Tang** **Chris Power**

Okay, so you haven't been on your summer holidays yet. Or perhaps haven't even had your shorts on for a game of cricket in the park, but already we're thinking about Christmas here at *PSM*. After all, there are only 186 shopping days left to go. Although little has been seen of the major games in production, you'd be foolish – even at this stage – to bet against *Tomb Raider 2* as the Yuletide best-seller. This month, however, Psygnosis reveal their secret weapon, *G-Police*, already described by Managing Director Ian Hetherington, as 'the next Christmas number one'. Find out the reason for his confidence on page 30.

Meanwhile we reveal our own plans to stay as the biggest-selling games mag in Britain with our biggest ever issue – 140 pages – and a guarantee that we are set to get bigger still. More news, more reviews, and more features, and a nice little box for the demo disc. It feels like Christmas already.

Rob Pegley

Rob Pegley (Editor)

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PREPLAY

G-Police 30
Psygnosis say it'll be the Christmas number one. We find out why.

Namco Museum Vol 4 33
More retro action with the latest from Namco.

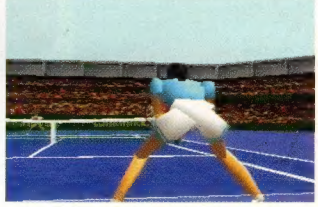
Bubsy 3D 34
Return of the cat. An update as *Bubsy 3D* finally reaches fruition.

All Star Soccer 36
Six Million Dollar Man meets footie in this bizarre title from Eidos.

V-Rally 38
A first look at Ocean's superb rally game. A PlayStation game that looks more than a match for the Saturn's flagship title *Sega Rally*.

Rally Cross 42
And if that's not enough rallying for you. Check out the Sony version that will be competing for your cash.

Acclaim line-up 44
Tennis and baseball are served up and pitched at the PlayStation, both from Acclaim.



PLAYTEST

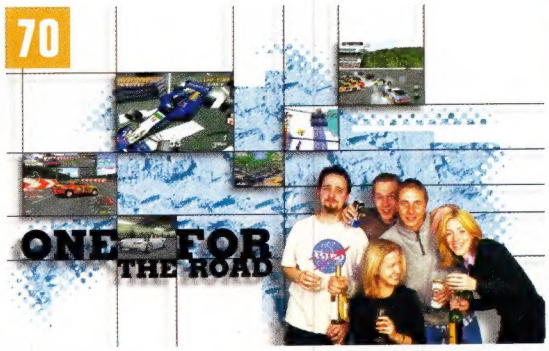
Carnage Heart 96
Space-age battles for mining rights on Jupiter, and a few twists besides.

Bubble Bobble 2 100
Platform puzzling at its very best in this sequel from Virgin.

Swagman 101
A cutesie puzzle adventure from Eidos with a hint of *Zelda* about it.

Epidemic 102
The sequel to *Kileak The Blood*. A rebel alliance battles against an evil force. And you are the key.

The Official UK PlayStation Magazine is dedicated to bringing its readers the most up-to-date information on all aspects of PlayStation gaming. Close links with Sony Computer Entertainment give us exclusive access to the very latest software and news, plus the coveted official demo CD which graces the magazine every month. Our game reviews are the most in-depth, honest and authoritative in the market, offering independent, unbiased buying advice. *PSM*: the biggest-selling videogames magazine in the UK.



FEATURES

Boss Studios 48
After a successful career in movie special FX, Boss move into games.

Loads and loads 50
Loading screens – don't you just love 'em? Here are 60 of the best.

The Beautiful Games 60
The history of footie in videogames with our verdict on the greats. Just which is the best ever?

One for the road 70
Take five players and some racing games, add alcohol, and then stand well back. See what happens.

Pst...Wanna buy a game? 77
A guide to piracy, second-hand games and your consumer rights.

PlayStation Power 84
We list the 50 biggest players in the PlayStation industry.

REGULARS

Loading 7
All the latest news on PlayStation.

Subscriptions 35
Sign for a year and get a free game.

Letters 54
Just what have you been saying?

Q&A 58
All your queries answered.

Back Issues 113
Complete your *PSM* collection.

Tips & Cheats 130
All you need to know about *Cool Boarders* and *Victory Boxing*.

Disc Pages 135
The complete instructions of how to play this month's cover games.

Official Questioning 138
Ex-Games Animal, Dave Perry, talks.

K1 The Arena Fighters 105
Martial arts hit the PlayStation.

Psychic Force 106
Gravity-free beat 'em up action.

Actua Club Edition 108
Gremlin move the goalposts. But only very slightly.

Spider 111
BMG's web-crawling night-mare is horribly playable. And anything but incey wincey.

WCW Vs The World 112
The best wrestling game yet? It surely shouldn't take much to be?

Super Puzzle Fighter II 114
The best puzzle game ever?

Need For Speed 2 117
EA take to the road again in style and at a very fast pace.

Vandal-Hearts 118
A fantastical and quirky Japanese offering with an amazing story.

NHL Powerplay Hockey 123
This time Virgin take a crack at the perennial sports sim.

Allied General 124
Is there still life in the hex-based war game? Mindscape certainly hope so as they try to match the success of Virgin's *Command & Conquer*.

Transport Tycoon 126
Finally a competitor for *A-Train* as the management sim takes to the roads at last.

Soccer '97 129
Olympic Soccer, from Eidos, is back again under a new guise. But is it actually any better?

SOULBLADE™

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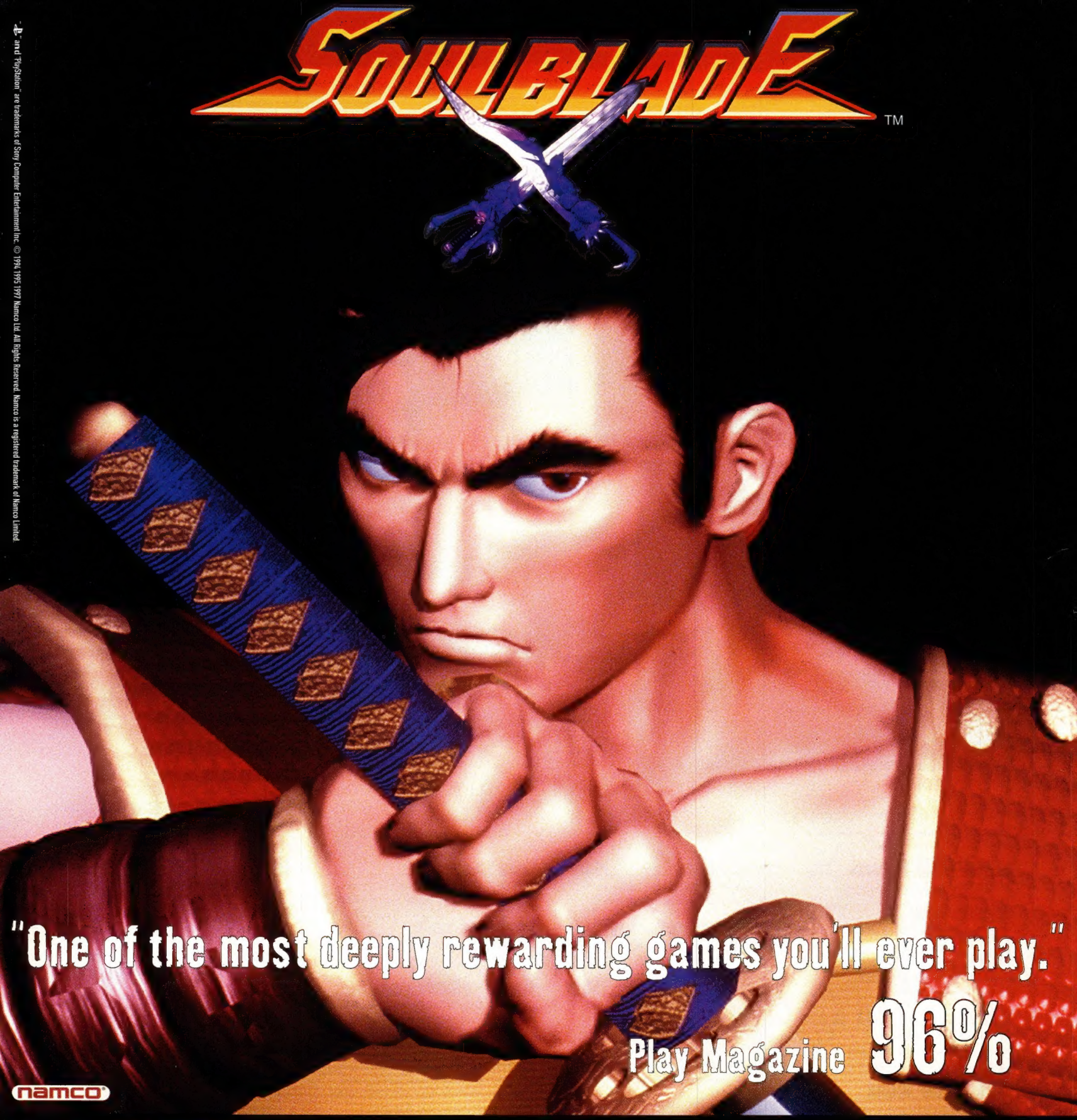

"One of the most deeply rewarding games you'll ever play."

Play Magazine 96%

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SONY

PlayStation

DO NOT UNDERESTIMATE THE POWER OF PLAYSTATION

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Update

Staff at Rare stake future with Sony

Donkey Kong Country on the PlayStation?

Sony have received a massive boost this month with the news that six key members of the Nintendo-linked Rare team are quitting to work on Sony-backed PlayStation products. The team, who have worked on the *Donkey Kong Country* series together with *Killer Instinct* and *Goldeneye* for the N64, have set up a company called Eighth Wonder (not to be confused with the Eighties synth-pop band fronted by Patsy Kensit).

Eighth Wonder, which are made up of two artists, three software engineers and games designer Oliver Davies, have already set up in offices in the Midlands and are set to release a game in the first half of the year. Currently being funded by SCEE, there is an option for Sony to take an equity interest in the future, and they are already committed to publishing Eighth Wonder's first three titles, with first refusal on the subsequent three games.

Speaking to industry newspaper *CTW*, SCEE president **Chris Deering** said: 'It's extremely gratifying that they've come to us. As far as we're concerned, this is on the same sort of level as SCE in Japan announcing that Squaresoft had agreed to do a *Final Fantasy* for the PlayStation.'

While Rare will no doubt continue to flourish, it is the fact that such leading developers for Nintendo have decided to back PlayStation rather than N64 which is of most significance. Indeed Eighth Wonder's **Oliver Davies** told *CTW* that he regarded the PlayStation as the most versatile of the next-generation consoles. 'We approached Sony because we viewed them as the market leader and we want to develop a series of market leading products', he said.

***Donkey Kong Country* was the game that kept interest in the SNES far longer than anyone could have imagined. And it showed what Rare could achieve on 16-bit. Imagine what they can do with 32.**

Juan Montes, General Manager of Software Development with Sony, has joined the new board of directors and is confident of future success: 'This announcement makes it clear that we will lead the games industry into the next millennium'.

Defecting from the East

PlayStation's latest acquisitions: *Turok* (1) and *Final Fantasy VII* (2).

This latest case of staff leaving Rare for a Sony alliance is the third example of a so-called Nintendo-only project transferring to the PlayStation. The Squaresoft switch which took place last year was the most significant, and resulted in unprecedented sales of *Final Fantasy VII*. More than two million copies of the game were sold in the first two days, with a total of four million selling over a two-week period.

Last month we reported on Acclaim's decision to release *Turok* on the PlayStation. And now the developers of *Donkey Kong Country* have followed suit. Where will it all end? *Mario* on the PlayStation? Perhaps not.

Sony have made modifications to the PlayStation, which means the machine can now be manufactured in a shorter time in order to satisfy the console's ever-increasing demand. And the resulting cost-savings can also be passed on to the consumer.

The most obvious difference to the PlayStation will be the removal of the RCA sockets at the back of the console (Stereo Left - Red socket, Stereo Right – white socket, Composite video out - yellow socket). All three outputs are now contained in an AV SCART socket also at the back of the console. This socket already appears on the existing version of the console.

For UK PlayStation users, a new RFU adaptor will be supplied with the modified console which will plug into the new SCART socket and will deliver stereo game sound to those PlayStation users equipped with a stereo TV.

The modifications to the console will not lead to any loss in the quality or connectivity of the PlayStation.

LOADING 12.5% COMPLETE

primal screen

The section in which we unveil the games that are new to you. Take a first look at some of the titles coming soon...

PRIMAL SCREEN IN BRIEF

Name: *F1 (working title)*
Style: Racing sim
Publisher: Eidos Interactive
Developer: Lankhor
Release: September '97

In a nutshell: Based on the stats from the 1995 season. Features 17 F1 tracks, 13 tracks and the usual glut of driving views and options.

First impressions: Developed by Lankhor, makers of the best racing game on the Mega Drive. The graphics look very crisp and detailed even at this stage.

Name: *Perfect Assassin*
Style: Sci-fi Adventure
Publisher: Groiler Interactive
Developer: Synthetic Dimensions
Release: September '97

In a nutshell: You play Charon, the perfect assassin fighting to regain your mind after it was wiped by an evil overlord.

First impressions: The game features real-time 3D, various intelligence levels and 27 different chapters to explore.

Name: *Screamer 2*
Style: Racing sim
Publisher: Mindscape
Developer: SSI
Release: April '97

In a nutshell: A worldwide racing game taking in courses from Finland, Columbia, Switzerland, Egypt, USA and England.

First impressions: The game will stand and fall on the two-player spilt-screen option. You can customise them to suit your style.

Parappa The Rappa

Mole with attitude

Style: Simon Says
Publisher: SCEE
Developer: Sony Japan
Release: September '97

In a nutshell: Keen readers will remember the name of this game from our Top 50 games feature in issue 17. Little was known of the game at the time but thankfully Sony have finally decided to give it a UK release. You play the role of Parappa, a strange cartoon character trying to win the heart of his favourite sunflower, Sunny Funny. To do this he has to learn different skills using the power of rap music. Still with us? Each 'level' is introduced with a cartoon scene showing what Parappa must do. It sounds strange, we know.

First impressions: Fantastic. When people heard we'd got this in the office a large crowd gathered in our games room to watch it. In each section you have to play a game of Simon says to advance. In the first level you meet Master Onion Head who teaches you to defend yourself through the wonders of rap. It's like watching *The Karate Kid* on acid...or so we've heard. We guarantee this is unlike any game you have ever played in your life. Driving lessons follow in the game that will be played at parties across Britain for the rest of the century. See it to believe it.

[1] Here's Mr Onion Head the karate teacher. [2] Don't worry, son, you soon will be. [3] A friendly flower to while away the time with. [4] Cool-looking characters turn up at will. [5] You won't linger on this for long once you've experienced the game. [6] The driving test.

Machine Hunter

It's the future

Style: 3D Shoot 'em up

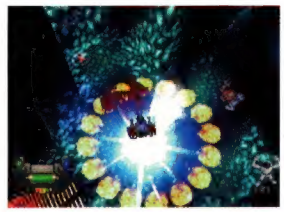
Publisher: Eidos Interactive

Developer: MGM Interactive

Release: July '97

In a nutshell: Set in the future, robots are now the mainstay of society performing all menial tasks around the house and the office. A strange virus has infected the robots on the outer planets, and you have to travel to each planet administering the antidote before it gets to Earth.

First Impressions: If you combine the idea of *Robotron X*, the



graphics of *Loaded* and the ideas of the classic C64 game *Paradroid* the you get a fairly good idea of what *Machine Hunter* is like. Wander round lots of mazes fighting robots to take control. Sounds good to us at *PSM*.

Conquest Earth

The Martial Chronicles

Style: Real-time battle sim

Publisher: Eidos Interactive

Developer: Data Design

Release: Summer '97

In a nutshell: *Conquest Earth* charts the war between Humans and the inhabitants of Jupiter. After the Galileo probe blasted through their atmosphere, they see it as an act of war and promptly set about making plans to invade the earth and wipe out the human race.

First Impressions: This certainly sounds very interesting. As well as playing the game in the usual *Command & Conquer* style you can also play the role of the troops when they attack. A nice combination of strategy and fast shoot 'em up action we reckon.

Air Race

Bandits at twelve o'clock

Style: Airborne racer

Publisher: T-HQ

Developer: X-ing

Release: August '97

In a nutshell: The first F1 take on rally driving. Featuring highly-accurate driving mechanics, you can choose between arcade or simulation mode as you drive 11 realistically-modelled rally cars, from the small but powerful Peugeot 306 to the terrifyingly fast Alfa Romeos.

First impressions: We only saw a very early version, but the game looked very impressive. Infogrames are working hard to get the game to run at 30fps at the very slowest point. To get the mechanics of the driving right, they've employed former Rally World Champion Ari Vatanen to make sure the game has a realistic feel. Details are scant at the moment but there should be at least 45 tracks with varying weather conditions and night-time racing to contend with. So far so good, then. PrePlay to follow soon.

1

2

(1) It's a long time since a decent flight sim appeared on the PlayStation – let's hope *Air Race* is it.
(2) Some of the scenery in the game is breathtaking.

INDUSTRY TALK

We heard some great news for *Doom* fans this week. You may remember the name John Romero from the credits of *Doom*. The world-famous games designer has left id Software to form his own company, ION Storm. The first big PlayStation game to come from the company will be *Daikatana*. Based on the *Quake* engine, the game will be a bit of a departure from the usual *Doom* clones, with the player having to interact with characters instead of simply blasting them to high heaven. Expect to see the game around Christmas.

Other interesting rumours involve the new version of *Formula 1* from Pysgnosis. Not to be confused with the new Eidos title, the latest racer will be based on stats from the current season, so Hill will be racing for TWR Arrows and Villeneuve will be the one everyone picks to race as. Also on its way from the Liverpool coders is a new version of *Adidas Power Soccer*. Utilising a totally new game engine, the title promises to be something special when it gets a release later this year.

Finally, as we promised last month that we would keep you up-to-date with all the news for the hottest titles... A friend of ours in the know has recently had a good look at *Tomb Raider 2*. Apparently it's looking even better than the original one, with far more detailed textures and character graphics. More details as we get them.

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The land of hope and glory

Our shores withhold some of the finest sources of videogame software in the world. Apart from Japan, that is. Here's an opportunity to find out about just some of the titles being prepared for imminent release

Liverpool:

In the ever-increasing battle to get the advantage in the footie game market Psygnosis have signed Wimbledon striker and part-time playboy Dean Holdsworth to help promote *Adidas Power Soccer International '97*. Famed for his unerring skill before the goal and his eye for the ladies, Psygnosis hope his signing will prove the final part of their hit team when the game is released later this month.

Derby:

Having revitalised the action adventure genre with *Tomb Raider*, Core Design are trying their luck with beat 'em ups. Rather than simply fighting on a static background *Fighting Force* puts you in a 3D world, giving you full freedom to fight wherever you want. Another innovation is the weapons system – if you can carry it, you can use it. Each of the four characters will have 50 moves to help them fight the multiple enemies. We'll have more details next month.

Sheffield:

Makers of fine sports sims, Gremlin Interactive are about to enter the ice hockey arena with their originally-named *Actua Ice Hockey*. Using their brand new True 3 engine, the coders used 10 different cameras to film the movements of Sheffield Steelers stars Chris Kelland and Piero Greco. To make sure the camera only filmed the action, Gremlin painted the ice dark blue to hide any reflections. During filming Blue Peter presenter Romana D'Annunzio donned a pair of skates to record a feature for the children's show.

Warwickshire:

Famed for bringing original games on to the market Codemasters look like they have struck gold with their *Jonah Lomu Rugby*. A huge advertising campaign over the last six months has resulted in pre-orders running even higher than their huge hit, *Micro Machines V3*.

Middlesex:

If you've ever wanted to buy famous London streets and charge exorbitant rates, then now's your chance. Following the success of the PC version (over 1,000,000 copies sold) Hasbro Interactive have announced plans to bring Monopoly to the PlayStation. As well as the classic capitalism sim, PlayStation owners will soon be able get hold of Battleship, RISK and Beast Wars.

UNITED STATES COLUMN

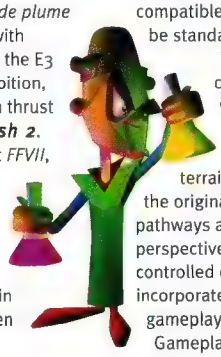
33 50N 84 24W

This month our American correspondent has found a mole in the Sony camp to furnish him with details of their E3 showing...

There have been observations that the most impressive products that Sony manufacture are their employees. The stock model will tirelessly work on behalf of the awesome collective and will never deviate from standard behavioural protocols. Suitably besuited, he or she is happy to sacrifice all for the good of those beloved little grey boxes.

For the Sony employee, the unthinkable crime of secretly talking to the press is likely to trigger some ghastly internal malfunction, so it came as a surprise when a reasonably senior figure started a clandestine and dangerous correspondence with the *Official UK PlayStation Magazine*.

Operating under a curious *nom de plume* of '#', our source has furnished us with salient details of Sony's presence at the E3 (The Electronics Entertainment Exhibition, held this year in Atlanta). Their main thrust will be ***Final Fantasy VII*** and ***Crash 2***. There's not much to be added about *FFVII*, except that it will be uncensored and unchanged from the gorgeous Japanese original. A story has been doing the rounds that Square originally fluffed the game's ending in order to get it out in time in Japan. But this has since been proven to be nonsense.



Sony will come to the show with the following puff line: 'The Most Anticipated Game of 1997 That's Only On PlayStation'. A bit of a mouthful, but probably true nonetheless. What about *Crash 2* (a working title)? Well, it's due to arrive in the US on November 4 and will be analog-controller compatible (even though primary control will be standard).

Early versions of the sequel to *Crash Bandicoot* will be unveiled at E3, with the game due out in November.

The game is no longer an obstacle course to navigate through but a whole new world to experience. It features more than 30 levels, each of which is double the terrain area than any of those found in the original. Players can explore different pathways and multiple gameplay perspectives. The pathways are still controlled environments but they will incorporate much branching and numerous gameplay views.

Gameplay is still level-based but the player will be able to select the direction of gameplay through a Warp Room rather than being directed in a linear path (a map).

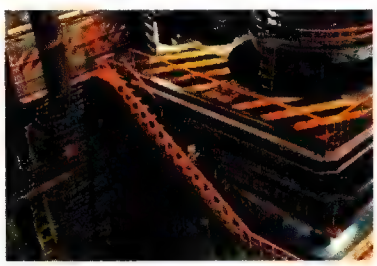
More hidden levels, more secret paths and more challenging puzzles are promised by our mole, as are new moves including dive, slide, dash, duck, crawl, belly flop, mow through obstacles, wade through water, climb, swing, jumps and super jumps.

Our rebellious chum also points out Sony's rating system for their upcoming product line. The AAA brigade steps forth revealing the previously-mentioned duo as well as ***Blasto*** and the sure-fire mega-hit, ***Game Day '98***.

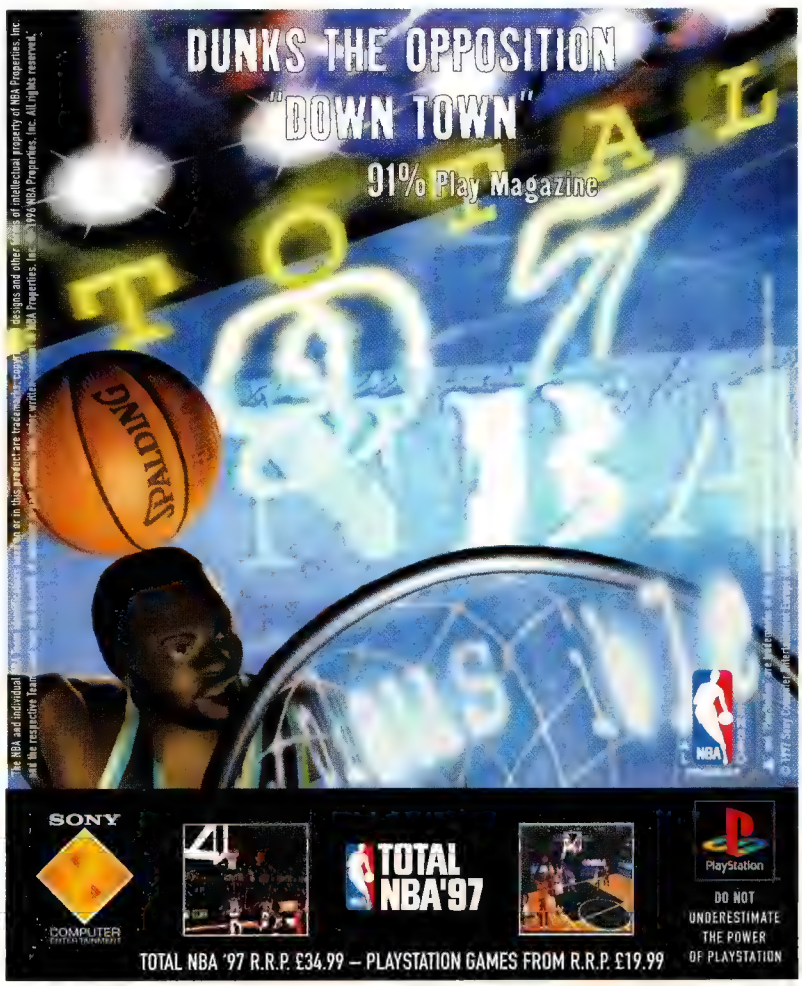
The A titles include ***Jet Moto 2***, ***NHL Face Off*** and ***Shootout 98*** as well as ***Spawn***. Further down the list comes titles with less general appeal including ***Future Chaos***, ***NCAA***, ***Steel Reign*** and ***Wild Arms***. Some of you may feel that this is being unfair to the last two, excellent as they seem. But the ratings have less to do with quality, and more to do with projected appeal, and are therefore tied into marketing budgets. Our friend '#' promises more goodies from Sony in the weeks ahead.

Elsewhere in the US, it now appears that ***Parappa*** will be released here (and therefore in Europe). But Sony execs are at a loss as to what to do with the thing. It is self-evidently a marvellous piece of software. But many players are dismayed at its temporal appeal. In short, the game is too short.

One possibility is to bundle it with one or more other games, or even with the hardware. Another is to offer it free with a certain number of purchases. Still another would be to make this excellent game longer. Alas, this is mere speculation.



***Final Fantasy VII* is still due for a release in the States, despite rumours to the contrary. The ending will also remain unchanged.**



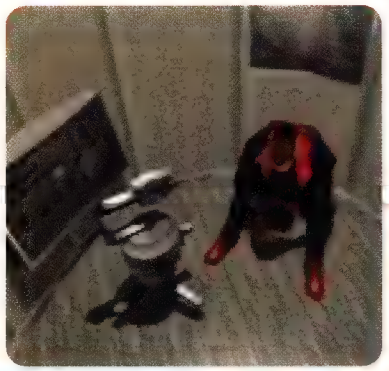
Paris: The PlayStation has more than its fair share of car racing games but when it comes to bike racing games they have been very thin on the ground. Fortunately things are about to change with the release of *Moto Racer* from Delphine Software, makers of *Fade To Black*. Already a hit on the PC, the game will offer both motor cross tracks and full-on racing tracks for you and a mate to blast around on the split-screen racing option. To keep you playing, Delphine have included secret tracks and special bikes to find which help you beat all-comers. More on this one next month.

San Francisco: Second only to the *Star Wars* figures in toy sales at the moment is the comic book hero Spawn. As the story goes, your character, an army veteran, was murdered and sold his soul to the Archdemon Malebolgia when he was offered a chance to live again but only if he lived in the hideous form of Spawn. The game takes you through different worlds battling evil until he collects enough magic to open the gates to face Malebolgia on his land. The comic has a great following and pedigree so it ought to be a good game. Certainly a graphical wonder. More information to follow shortly.

The World of PlayStation

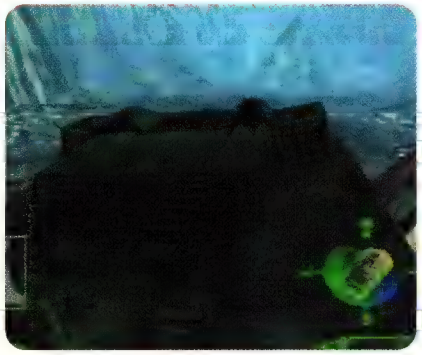
Here in dear old Blighty, it's easy to forget there's a whole world of videogames out there. We travel every month in search of the latest gaming information. This month we found most of it in Japan...

Japan: Picture this. You wake up, you're in a secret underground base and you don't know who you are or where you are. All you do know is you have been infected with a deadly disease and you only have a few hours to find the antidote. Not your typical hangover scenario. So begins *Overblood*, a full 3D sci-fi epic developed by Riverhillsoft in Japan. To help you in your mission you can switch between three different characters, each with varying attributes to help find your cure. The game is released in the UK at the end of the month and we should have a review in the next issue.



Japan: One of our favourite game genres is the multi-player arena battle of which *Balderdash* and *Bomberman* are examples. Unfortunately we have had to make do with sneaking the odd quick game on the SNES to play a decent version, until now that is. *Poypoy*, from Konami, places the players in such an arena. Each player is blessed with huge muscles to throw a variety of objects from rocks to bombs at the other players until they lose all their energy. You will be able to pick up bombs, power balls, speed boosts and so on. No doubt the game will take ages to come over from Japan but it sounds like it will be worth the wait when it finally arrives.

Japan: If, like us, you reckon the choice of tank games on the PlayStation is pretty poor, then take heart with the news that *Steel Reign*, a new tank blaster game, is soon to hit the streets. The game will feature a two-player, split-screen option where you can battle it out between friends using a frightening array of weapons from little mini-guns to missiles and lasers. The battlezones vary from city-scapes to deep canyons and each mission requires you to complete the challenge faster than your partner.



FOREIGN COVERAGE

And they read licensed *Official PlayStation Magazines* abroad, too. Here's what our foreign friends are reporting on.

Italy

There are two types of foreign PlayStation mags: those that take our copy, translate and redesign it and those that simply translate it. The Italians opt for the second option, preferring just to copy everything. Based on our April issue, the main feature this month is our study of addiction. There's even an ad for the Italian version of PlayStation Power. However, they've added a short feature on a glossary of terms – similar to the one in PSM.

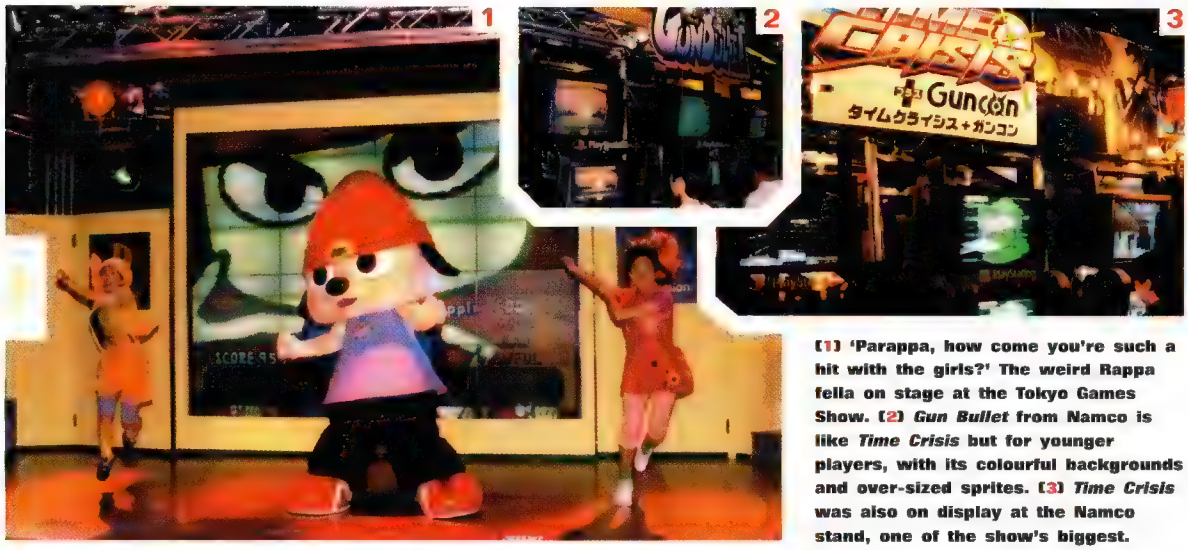
Germany

After last month's more-than-peculiar choice of *Space Jam* for the cover, the Germans once again make a strange decision. Young Casper the friendly ghost graces the front, as do Tic Tac Toe, an all-German girl group, similar to the Spice Girls. Although not as good, of course. On the disc is *Toshinden 2*, *Supersonic Racers*, *Olympic Power Sports* and *Gunship*. A more-than respectable line-up.

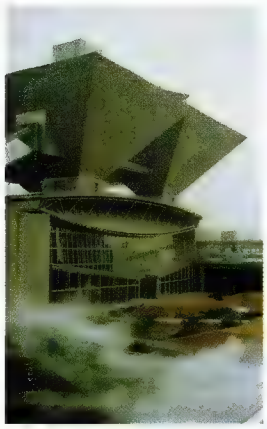
JAPAN COLUMN

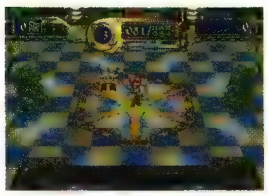
36 36N 140 39E

PSM's man in the Orient returns with tidings of what's new and what's big in Japan, this time reporting from the recent Tokyo Game Show



(1) 'Parappa, how come you're such a hit with the girls?' The weird Rappa fella on stage at the Tokyo Games Show. (2) *Gun Bullet* from Namco is like *Time Crisis* but for younger players, with its colourful backgrounds and over-sized sprites. (3) *Time Crisis* was also on display at the Namco stand, one of the show's biggest.





Some 459 games were present at the Tokyo games show, but although there was a large PlayStation presence, Saturn and Nintendo games were scarce.

This year the Tokyo Game Show took place between April 4-6 and attracted no less than 120, 000 visitors. And although there was a lack of Saturn and Nintendo hits, this contrasted with the healthy state of the PlayStation market. In all, a staggering 459 new titles were officially introduced: 45 per cent were PlayStation games, 31 per cent Saturn, 10 per cent PC and only 5 per Nintendo 64.

Namco's booth was one of the biggest at the show. Big titles were plentiful but there was no really new software, the only exception being Gun Bullet, a shooting game using Namco's lightgun. *Gun Bullet* is an arcade conversion which is aimed at a younger audience than Time Crisis, with its very colourful graphical interface and over-sized sprites. *Time Crisis* was also being shown again. Due to be released at the end of June it too makes use of Namco's gun, the famous arcade 'pedal' being replaced by a side button located on the gun. It looks a good-quality conversion and should be a good title for this summer. Ace Combat 2, also on display, contains stunning graphics and offers more missions than before.

Konami introduced a new gorgeous RPG called *Other Dream Azure Life* as well as Midnight Run Fighter 2. The latter was still in early stages of development so the graphics were very rough. *Metal Gear* was the notable absence from the stand. Konami seem to be saving this one for later...

To celebrate Rockman's tenth anniversary, Capcom were presenting two new Rockman games – Rockman X4 and Rockman Battle *Race. Rockman X4*. There were also playable demos of Resident Evil 2 and Breath of Fire 2 for PlayStation, although *Res 2* is now forecast for an end-of-year release.

Sony had a huge stand as usual. The main attraction being Ghost in the Shell (from the animated movie), another *Doom* clone. The game is set within a polygonal town where the player pilots a futuristic tank which can jump and climb on to buildings.The game attracted a lot of attention form the crowds, with lines of queues forming in front of the screens. Sony also showed Alundra, Beldeselva – an action RPG game that's been in development for some time – and StreetGames 97, which has enjoyed relative success in Japan.

Squaresoft's stand also attracted lots of people. The big title on show was *Tobal 2* which has just been released in Japan. And to celebrate its debut Bun Bun Maru, the Virtua Fighter master, was there demoing the game. Bun Bun Maru is rumoured to be the best fighting game player in the world and often appears on TV or in game shows. Square also introduced Front Mission 2 and there was a playable demo of Final Fantasy Tactics, a simulation-based RPG featuring *Final Fantasy* characters. According to Square this game will even appeal to gamers that aren't necessarily fans of the genre.

Asmik introduced Vanark Astro Troopers, a gorgeous-looking shooting game which also includes a story mode and Xing showed racing game Reciproheat 5000 – the game system is pretty strange but the gameplay is enjoyable. Finally, Takara introduced a new 3D robot game called Blue Night, but rather like the show itself, it was interesting but nothing innovative.

(1) *Front Mission 2* was introduced for the first time by Squaresoft. (2) Square's stand was a popular place to be at the show. We wonder why?

BUILD THE ULTIMATE GOAL SCORING MACHINE

OUT SOON ON PLAYSTATION !

"The ultimate Playstation challenge for all soccer fans! Build your perfect dream team! Not only does All Star Soccer let you dictate the tactics, formation and playing style of your squad, but actually lets you create custom players with just the right mix of skill, speed and intelligence. If you thought all football games are the same, then you haven't played All Star Soccer!"

PlayStation

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LOADING 56.25% COMPLETE

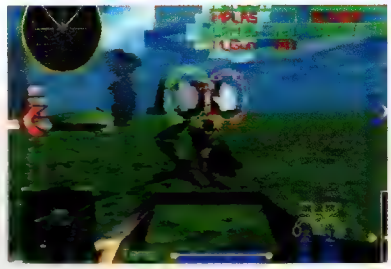
TALKING SHOP

Getting stronger by the day

Retailers report booming sales of top titles

With no new additions to the Platinum range of games this month, we thought we'd take a look at the state of the full-price software market. And it seems that April will go down as one of the best months for games sales for some time.

Darren White, from Electronics Boutique in Bath, told us sales had been flourishing: '*Porsche Challenge* has done really well. It's been the game I've been recommending to customers looking for a game'. When asked how the new prices had affected sales, he replied: 'Both *Porsche Challenge* and *Total NBA '97* have done really well. At £34.99, they're a bargain'. Other games to sell well this month have been *Exhumed* and *MechWarrior 2*. Mail order company 101 Computer Games have been equally busy this month, shipping out numerous copies of *Porsche Challenge* and *Total NBA '97*. Manager **Geoff Knox** said: '*Porsche* has great graphics, and plays really well when you get into it. You can't go wrong with the two-player option. Any racing game now has to have a two-player option otherwise it won't sell'. One surprise was the popularity of *Jonah Lomu Rugby*. 'I've taken a lot of early orders for this one,' Geoff continued, 'but the big title for the next two months is *ISS Pro*. I've already taken a lot of orders for this one – some people have even reserved secondhand copies.' It would seem the PlayStation market is getting stronger by the day. Give it a month and a PAL version of *Ridge Racer* will be on sale. You got to admit, it's a good time to own a PlayStation.



Top 20

The Gallup top 20 of PlayStation games on sale now. With last month's placings in brackets.

© ELSPA, compiled by Chart Track

1 (NE) *Porsche Challenge* SCEE
2 (1) *Micro Machines V3* Codemasters
3 (4) *Tomb Raider* Eidos Interactive
4 (5) *Destruction Derby* Eidos
5 (3) *Tekken* SCEE
6 (NE) *Exhumed* Lobotomy
7 (2) *Ridge Racer* SCEE
8 (9) *Formula 1* Psygnosis
9 (NE) *Total NBA '97* SCEE
10 (10) *Cool Boarders* SCEE
11 (18) *Alien Trilogy* Acclaim
12 (16) *Crash Bandicoot* SCEE
13 (11) *Die Hard Trilogy* Fox Interactive
14 (6) *Wipeout* SCEE
15 (10) *Command & Conquer* Virgin
16 (NE) *MechWarrior 2* Activision
17 (15) *Tekken 2* SCEE
18 (12) *FIFA '97* Electronic Arts
19 (19) *Worms* Ocean/Team 17
20 (NE) *Soccer '97* Eidos Interactive

ChartTrack

OUT THIS MONTH

THE LATEST PLAYSTATION RELEASES

May

May promises to be a good month for games releases especially for sports fans. By now you'll have been able to get hold of a copy of the new *Actua Soccer* game, the *Club Edition*, which is to be followed shortly by *Actua Golf 2*. Currently a hit in the cinemas, *Star Wars* could soon be heading to a PlayStation near you with the release of *Dark Forces* and *Rebel Assault II*. But probably the biggest title of the month is *Soul Blade*. Although it's been censored for the UK, the game still remains a classic beat 'em up. April proved a great month for games with the release of *Porsche Challenge*, *Total NBA '97*, *Exhumed* and *MechWarrior 2* to name but a few. All four of these games have stormed into the charts with *Porsche Challenge* surprising a few critics by going straight in at number one. You see, we do know what we're talking about.

ON SALE NOW!

Information provided by Electronics Boutique

Soul Blade	SCEE	*PSM*19	8/10
Actua Soccer: Club Edition	Gremlin Int	*PSM*20	7/10
Super Puzzle Fighter II Turbo	Virgin	*PSM*20	9/10
City Of Lost Children	Psygnosis	*PSM*19	3/10
Road Rage	Konami	*PSM*16	5/10
Tokyo Highway Battle	T-HQ	*PSM*19	7/10
Jonah Lomu Rugby	Codemasters	*PSM*19	7/10
Need For Speed 2	Electronic Arts	*PSM*20	5/10
Dark Forces	Virgin	*PSM*18	5/10
VR Pool	Interplay	*PSM*16	8/10
Trash It	GT Interactive	*PSM*19	6/10

Official UK PlayStation Magazine RECOMMENDS

Jonah Lomu Rugby

Jonah Lomu is the first rugby game for the PlayStation and a fine try at that. The visuals may not be the most sophisticated you'll see in a sports sim, but it's pacey, playable fare. It's a game that requires perseverance, simply because rugby is complex, but worth the effort.

Soul Blade

Just like its massively-popular arcade counterpart, what makes this so exciting to play is its serious weapons. It may not have the depth of the *Tekken* fellows, but its incredible graphics and the addition of a Story mode make it enough of a fix until *Tekken 3* arrives.

MechWarrior 2

Well, if you're 100ft tall and made of metal you're bound to be pretty darned hard, right? *MechWarrior 2* is a beautifully realised combat game, far superior than its nearest competitor, *Krazy Ivan*. It's seek-and-destroy fare with a colossal 48 missions and fine fun to boot.

Super Puzzle Fighter II Turbo

Combine the brilliance of *Tetris* with the excellence of *Super Fighter* and you'll get close to *Super Puzzle Fighter II Turbo*. Ignoring the over-elaborate title, its subtleties of gameplay and tactical elements make for arguably the best puzzler ever to appear on any machine.

RUSH HOUR CAN BE MURDER

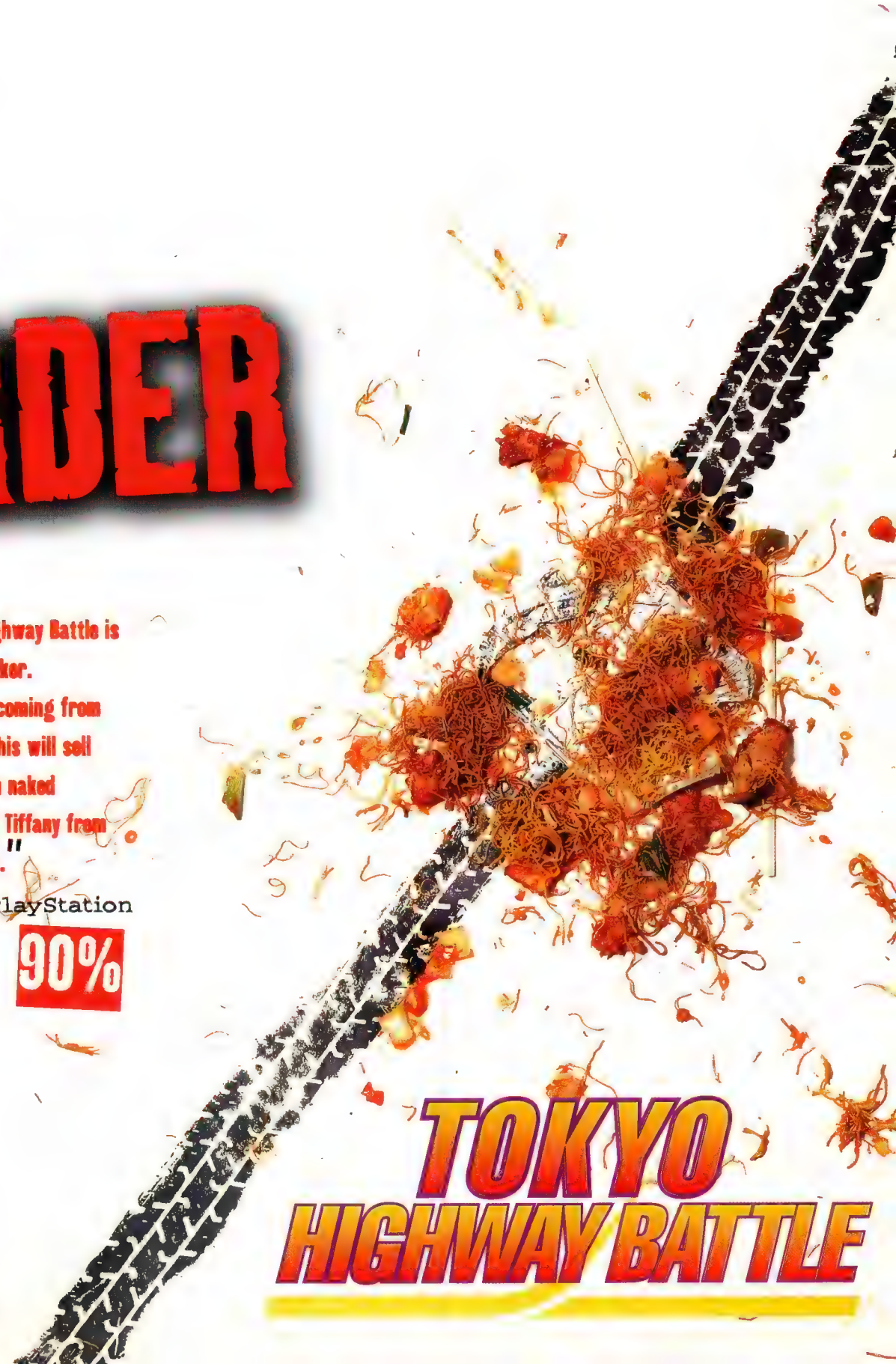
"More tracks than Ridge Racer and more realistic handling..."

For more information on THQ titles visit:
www.thq.com

"Tokyo Highway Battle is a real shocker. Seemingly coming from nowhere, this will sell faster than naked pictures of Tiffany from Eastenders."

Total PlayStation

90%



TOKYO HIGHWAY BATTLE

THQ International Ltd,
4 The Parade, Epsom,
Surrey, KT18 5DH

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The Sony Roadshow

And a quite Capital one as well

In the absence of a Spring ECTS, the industry got together to organise a little look-see for the trade recently. The PlayStation Roadshow took to the streets last month, hitting hotels in Manchester, London and Birmingham.

Organised by Sony and distributors Centresoft, the idea of the tour was to show retailers what the big titles of the year would be and let them take a good look at the games. With more than a 1,000 visitors getting a good look at 60 top titles, the shows were deemed a big success with *G Police*, *Time Crisis*, *ISS Pro* and *Porsche Challenge* proving the most popular.

As well as the new software, traders were given a close look at the Yaroze system and Centresoft's new website allowing retailers immediate access to sales figures and orders.

In a similar vein, any young reader getting hold of their copy of *PSM* quick enough should get down to the Sony PlayStation sponsored 95.8 FM Capital Extravaganza. From May 24–27, Earls Court will be turned into every adult's nightmare as Capital FM host what they modestly call, 'the highlight of the teenage social calendar'. It will feature some of the nation's top teen-bands, including 911, Kavana and Damage, as well as a fashion-and-beauty zone with models from top agencies performing on the catwalk. Sporty teenagers will be able to try their hand at parachuting, dancing and biking.

If you're interested and read this article in time, call the ticket hotline – 0171 420 0958 – quote our magazine, and you'll get a discount. Otherwise tickets cost £6 or £5 with a flyer.

***ISS Pro* and *Porsche Challenge* were just two of the games on display at the PlayStation Roadshow.**

GREAT MOMENTS IN VIDEOGAMING

Number 20:
Scoring a beautiful volley in *ISS Pro* seconds away from the final whistle to give you the winning goal.

Time is running out, this is your last chance to score. You push up, the crowd gets excited and then Carboni blasts the ball towards the net. The keeper concedes the corner. As the tension builds your leading goalscorer swaggers into position. The ball is floated in from the corner, the ball drops, Carboni twists, jumps salmon-like connecting perfectly with the ball and it's in the back of the net. The crowd go mad. It's only when you play it back in slow motion you see the sheer beauty of the goal. What a way to win the Championship.

Connect

Make more of yer time on line

Those who still think the Net is the domain of Spock-obsessed gibbering nerds are in for a big surprise. Boasting the biggest phonebill in the Internet industry, *Connect* is a brand new species of *.net* magazine. Each month it will review and rate over 250 new sites in sections ranging from movies and music to comics and conspiracy theories. It also informs you where to chat with the stars and comes with a free CD. On sale May 29 for £4.99.

In *Power* this month

and other *Essential* stuff

If you've got a couple of quid spare next month you should take a look at the June issue of *PlayStation Power*. Highlights of the month will be the first ever UK review of the magnificent *Rage Racer* and the usual top-quality reviews of *V-Rally*, *Overblood*, *Vandal-Hearts*, *Psychic Force* and *Darklight Conflict*.

And, in their free 68-page, full-colour tips bible there are guides to *Soul Blade*, *Tenka* and *Exhumed*, stacks of tips and cheats for all your favourite games as well as a chance to win two exclusive customised PlayStations!

If you're feeling particularly rich this month, you could also treat yourself to Issue Three of *Essential PlayStation*. Some people still haven't taken advantage of the Platinum bargains and if you're one of them, let *Essential* guide you with big reviews of all six titles. There's also a huge feature on PlayStation blasters and, as ever, the magazine comes with the CD jam-packed with 10 demo games including *F1*, *Die Hard Trilogy* and *Wipeout 2097*. But hurry, it won't be in the shops forever.

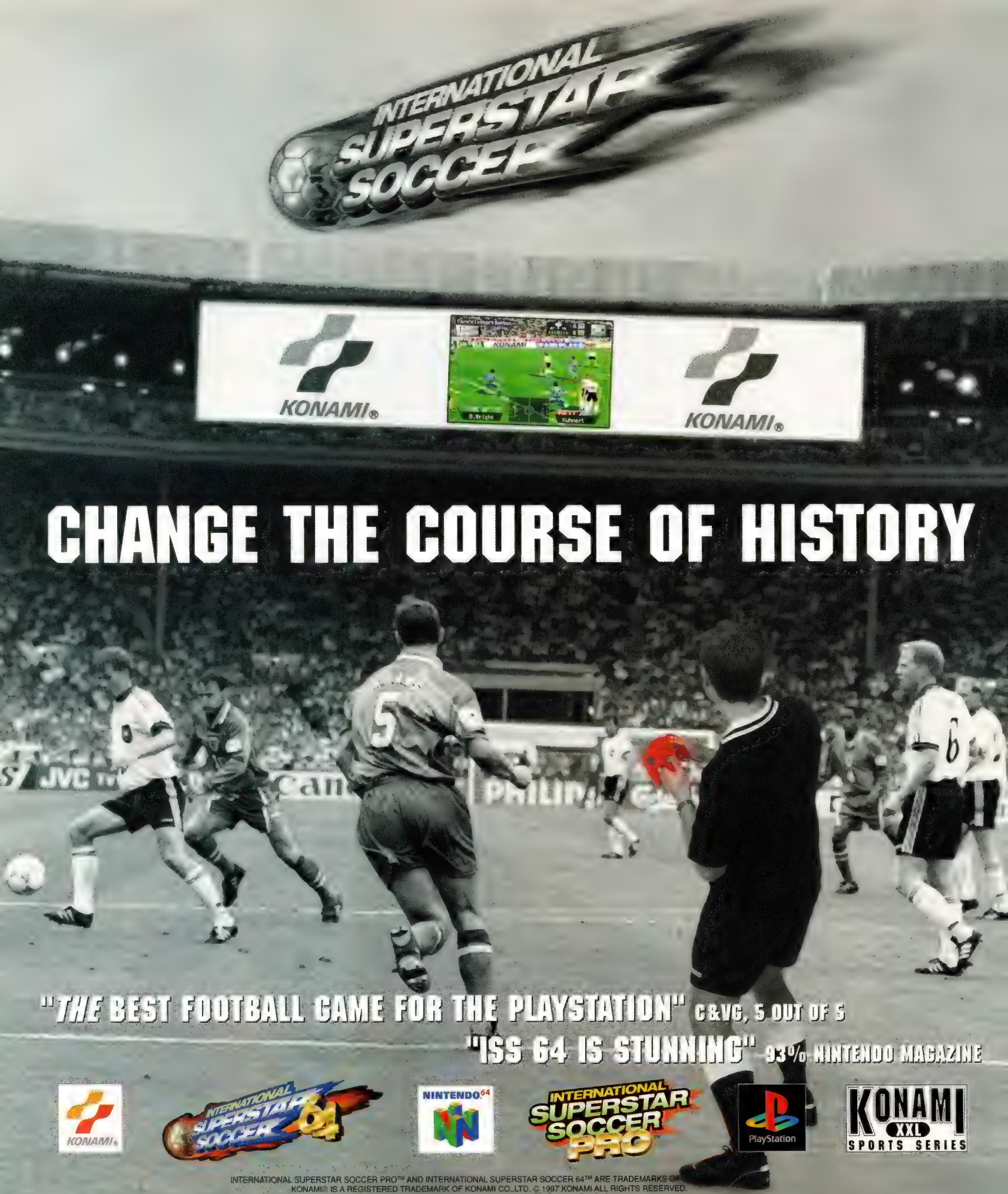
At £5.99 you really can't go wrong.

ELSPA reminder

Become a PlayStation programmer

If you've ever fancied a job in the PlayStation industry and know your way round the odd bit of code, then you really ought to have a good look at the ESLPA Game Designer of the Year competition. Detailed in last month's *PSM*, the aim of the competition is to uncover tomorrow's coders. The competition is split into three categories: 3D animation sequences, game demos or finished games. The winner in each category will receive a Sony Yaroze PlayStation, while the overall winner will be given £5000 and a massive boost to their CV. For more information, contact ELSPA at Suite 1, Haddons acre, Station Road, Offenham, Evesham, Worcestershire WR 11 5LW.

INTERNATIONAL SUPERSTAR SOCCER



CHANGE THE COURSE OF HISTORY

"*THE* BEST FOOTBALL GAME FOR THE PLAYSTATION" C&VG, 5 OUT OF 5

"ISS 64 IS STUNNING" 93% NINTENDO MAGAZINE

KONAMI® INTERNATIONAL SUPERSTAR SOCCER 64 NINTENDO 64 INTERNATIONAL SUPERSTAR SOCCER PRO PlayStation KONAMI XXL SPORTS SERIES

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LOADING 68.75% COMPLETE

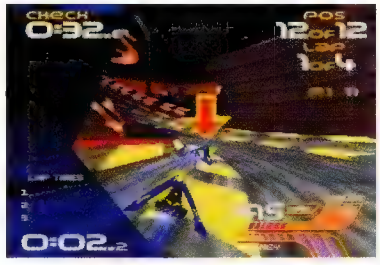
READERS LIVES

What's the score?

Fast times and PlayStation highs

This month has been very busy for high scores. Since we printed *Wipeout 2097* times, every man and his dog has been writing in, offering his/her best times. Some were laudable, while most were laughable. Of all the times sent, the honours were shared between John Lumsden, from Maidenhead, and Jonathan Barton from Cleveleys, who both managed some incredible times racing in the Arcade Phantom mode.

The latest games to have high scores are *Wipeout 2097* and *Cool Boarders*. So what are you good at playing?



WIPEOUT 2097

John Lumsden, Maidenhead

Talons' Reach	Racetime	1:49:6
	Laptime	0:21:2
Valparaiso	Racetime	3:15:3
	Laptime	0:36:4
Spilskinanke	Racetime	3:01:5
	Laptime	0:32:6

Johnathan Barton, from Cleveleys, beat his times on the other five tracks...

Sagarmartha	Racetime	2:05.8
	Laptime	0:22:7
Phenitia Park	Racetime	3:05:0
	Laptime	0:33:8
Gare D'Europa	Racetime	3:14:9
	Laptime	0:35:5
Odessa Keys	Racetime	3:18:1
	Laptime	0:36:6
Vostok Island	Racetime	3:15:4
	Laptime	0:35:8

COOL BOARDERS

Total ranking	7436 points
Time ranking	1:09:181
Section one	0:23:522
Section two	0:22:334
Section three	0:22:731
Trick ranking	3216 points
Best trick	924 points

EXPERT TRACK

Total Ranking	6422
Time Ranking	2:19:708
Section one	0:33:066
Section two	0:47:283
Section three	0:54:212
Trick ranking	2751 points
Best trick	884

Back to the old favourites. Readers are constantly astounding us with their *Tekken 2* scores. Following on from our recent survival scores, Rob Turpin worked his way through 63 rounds, lasting 3 hours 28 mins. Can you beat that? We'd like to see the proof if you can.

Anyone wishing to add their two bob's worth to the Readers' Top 50 should get their nominations in soon as possible, as we're just about to draw the final votes. There've been some interesting replies so far, with someone declaring *X-Com: Enemy Unknown* to be the best game ever while disregarding *Tomb Raider* as one of the worst. If you disagree with this, or many of the other strange entries, make sure that you let us know by sending a list of your top five games to: Readers' Top 50, *Official UK PlayStation Magazine*, Future Publishing, 30 Monmouth Street, Bath BA1 2BW.

Travelling without moving

Five X-Cellerator steering wheels to be won!

If you thought you had the ultimate PlayStation driving set-up, think again. Not content with just having a special steering wheel, two of our readers went down to their local scrap-yards, ripped out car seats and plonked them in front of their TVs.

Steven Rogers, from Bolton, sent us instructions on how to make our own, adding that, 'With the help of these peripherals, God himself would come second'. Hmm. Vince Robson, from Runfold, also sent us a whole series of piccies and some more instructions.

If you fancy copying Steven or Vince you can make a start by entering our competition. We have five VRF1 X-Cellerator Steering Wheels with pedals, from Fire International, to give away. These elaborate new steering wheels feature full analogue control, Ferrari-styled 'drilled' accelerator /brake pedals and full compatibility with the best racing games on the market.

Simply send a postcard with your name and address to Wheels of Fire, *Official UK PlayStation Magazine*, Future Publishing, Monmouth Street, Bath BA1 2BW and the first five drawn out of the bag will be the lucky winners of these impressive pieces of hardware.

Here are two of the set-ups we've been sent in the past few weeks in which people have created their own DIY arcade simulators. Reckon you can do better than this? Then we'd like to see pictorial evidence.

The Future Is About To Become History

EXCALIBUR 2555 AD

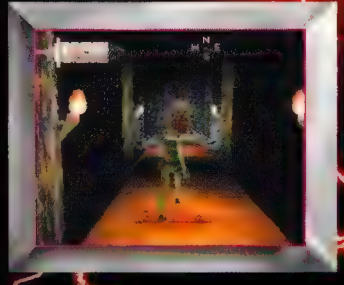
A totally unique and ground-breaking adventure, combining the best graphical elements of *Tomb Raider* and the atmosphere, depth and playability of *The Legend of Zelda*.

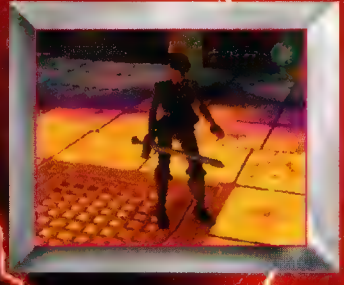
Plus, massive panoramic 3D environments and intricate consuming puzzles make Excalibur 2555AD an absolute epic.

Featuring: over 200 massive locations, 80 fully talking characters, incredible realistic light-sourcing, intriguing puzzles and hand-to-hand combat.

"...could well do for 3D action adventures what *Tomb Raider* did for 3D platformers" EDGE

"...has atmosphere in spades" PlayStation plus





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PlayStation

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LOADING 75% COMPLETE

MENTAL KOMBAT

This month we get two of our esteemed colleagues to put their money where their mouths are, as we see whether PlayStation magazine editors really know what they're talking about. Step forward Sean '*PlayStation Power*' Atkins and Pete '*Essential PlayStation*' Wilton. Your time starts now...

Name: Sean Atkins **Age:** 27 **Job:** Editor of *PlayStation Power* **Favourite game:** Sean's favourite game is *Smash Court Tennis*, from Namco, and when it comes to literary tools, he always advocates astonishing and abstract alliteration.

Name: Pete Wilton **Age:** 26 (allegedly) **Job:** Editor of *Essential PlayStation* **Favourite game:** Pete is into playing *Wipeout 2097*, but when it comes to writing copy, he's written more metaphors than Jo Brand has had hot dinners.

QUESTIONS	SEAN 'POWER'		PETE 'ESSENTIAL'	
1. What is the full title of the first *Oddworld* game?	*Oddworld: Abe's Oddysee*	1/1	*Oddworld: Abe's Oddysee*	1/1
2. Who are developing *V-Rally* and *Rally Cross* respectively?	*V-Rally* – Ocean, *Rally Cross* – Sony	2/2	*V-Rally* – Ocean, *Rally Cross* – Namco	1/2
3. What do *Vandal-Hearts* and *Contra* have in common?	Konami (with their PR bloke who drinks like a four-year-old girl with flu)	1/1	They're both from Konami	1/1
4. Which game is currently top of the PlayStation charts?	*Porsche Challenge*	1/1	*Cool Boarders*, probably	0/1
5. Who is Peter Molyneux?	Potato-headed Bullfrog media-whore	1/1	Director at Bullfrog	1/1
6. Name two titles on *Namco Museum Volume 3*.	*Galaxian* and *Ms PacMan*	2/2	Erm, *Tower Of Druaga* (I think that's how you spell it) and *Ms PacMan*?	2/2
7. Who developed *Spider*?	Boss Interactive Studios	1/1	BMG... no they published it. Nope.	0/1
8. Which game is *Soccer '97* an update of?	*Olympic Soccer*	1/1	*Olympic Soccer*	1/1
9. What does NTSC stand for?	Nice Tits Sarah Cracknell!	0/1	National Standards Television Committee, or Now That's Shifty Colour. Am I warm?	1/1
10. Name an N64 game.	Super over-priced no better than PS 64	1/1	*Turok*	0/1
VERDICT	11 – A powerful 11 from Atko and a rich vein of bile-laden humour. We like his style.		8 – A very commendable eight for Pete's *Essential* selection. He knows his stuff.	

We predict...

... that next month's top 10 selling games will look like this. What do you reckon? If you can get any closer to the final 10 than this with your guess, then we'll send you whichever game is at number one. Answers on a postcard to the usual address, labelled 'Top 10'.

1. (NE) ***Soul Blade***
   SCEE
2. (1) ***Porsche Challenge***
   SCEE
3. (2) ***Micro Machines***
   Codemasters
4. (3) ***Tomb Raider***
   Eidos Interactive
5. (4) ***Destruction Derby***
   Psygnosis Platinum
6. (5) ***Tekken***
   SCEE Platinum
7. (NE) ***Jonah Lomu Rugby***
   Codemasters
8. (6) ***Exhumed***
   BMG
9. (7) ***Ridge Racer***
   SCEE Platinum
10. (9) ***Total NBA '97***
    SCEE

Answers to Mental Kombat
1. *Oddworld: Abe's Oddysee*. 2. *V-Rally* is from Ocean and *Rally Cross* from SCEA. 3. Both from Konami. 4. *Porsche Challenge*. 5. Head of Bullfrog. 6. *Galaxian*, *The Tower of Druaga*, *Dig Dug*, *Ms Pac-Man*, *Phozon* and *Pole Position II*. 7. Boss Interactive Studios. 8. *Olympic Soccer*. 9. National Television Standards Committee. 10. Who cares?

QuizStation

But, hey, what do the media know that you don't? With six short answers you can show up the videogames fourth estate for the rag-tag, uninformed bunch of wasters and liggers that it is. Simply write six correct answers to our questions opposite and send them to the address below. The best answers rather than the correct ones will be our winner.

Answers on a POSTCARD to:
QuizStation 20, *Official UK PlayStation Magazine*,
30 Monmouth Street, Bath BA1 2BW. Entries to us by June 20.

The questions

1) Are friends electric?
2) Is she really going out with him?
3) Who do you think you are?
4) What's love got to do with it?
5) What time is love?
6) Why does the caged bird sing?

"A creepy-crawly, dangling delight!"
OFFICIAL PLAYSTATION MAGAZINE

"Set to be one of the year's more enigmatic releases"
OFFICIAL PLAYSTATION MAGAZINE

INCY, WINCY SPIDER

PlayStation

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BOSS GAME STUDIOS

BMG INTERACTIVE

YOU SHOULD BE AWARE THAT SONY HAVE INFLICTED THEIR NEW SAMPLER ON AN UNSUSPECTING PUBLIC.
POWER SOURCE CONTAINS: TOMB RAIDER, PORSCHE CHALLENGE, MONSTER TRUCKS 2 AND DESTRUCTION DERBY 2.
YES, YOUR THUMBS WILL HURT, YOUR BRAIN WILL HURT, BUT YOUR SOUL WILL BE PURE. ALL PROCEEDS GO TO THE PRINCE'S TRUST.

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The journey to work involves commuting from Richmond in south-west London, which gives me the choice of London Transport to Piccadilly Circus, or South West Trains to Waterloo. There's no contest. Everything you've have heard about SWT is true. So it has to be the District line, followed by the Piccadilly line – usually packed like sushi in the central zones – and then a short walk from Piccadilly Circus to the office. This takes a bit less than an hour, the exact time depending on whether I stop for Canadian muffins on the way. Now that I'm on a diet, I get to work earlier.

Waverley House is in Soho, which has the biggest concentration of advertising, film, video, post-production and other media businesses in the UK. And the biggest red light district. It's in the middle of the West End, with loads of cinemas, theatres, shops and restaurants nearby.

The first thing I always do is brew fresh coffee and have a big cupful. This gets the brain working. I check my post, e-mail and voice-mail, then make a list of priorities, which usually has some unfinished items carried forward from yesterday.

Producer of Special Products for SCEE, Richard Milner (right).

Work, Rest, and PlayStation

'I see a lot of interesting stuff that unfortunately is confidential. I can only say that there are going to be some great games coming out in the coming year...' Special Products Producer **Richard Milner** talks you through his life in a day

There's always lots going in the Special Projects department. My main job is to co-ordinate production of cover-mount and other demo discs. Special Projects now produce three different monthly discs for *Official PlayStation Magazines* – UK, France and Germany – plus a variety of special discs with longer schedules. These include the Demo 1 CD, boxed with the hardware, and the discs which go to registered users. I have to keep tabs on all of these productions, and make sure they hit their deadlines (or at least aren't too late!).

We have various other projects, which include graphics for clubs and dance events like Tribal Gathering, TV shows such as *The A Zone*, and various multimedia projects such as the Erotic Design show. We also do some video production, some of which can be seen on our demo discs. So the work is very varied, and has a good balance of technical and creative requirements. This keeps it fresh and interesting, though it can be hectic at times.

Of course there's a lot of admin to do. I always tackle this straight away and clear it as fast as possible. A lot of this comes in by e-mail – I couldn't work without it. Sony is a very global company – I have to communicate with colleagues around Europe, America, Japan and Australia, so we need to cover all time zones.

I have three artists and two programmers working with me, and we can always call on the resources of the Developer Support engineers. We help them with graphics work at times, like for the Developer and Net Yaroze web sites. There's a frequent interchange of ideas, techniques and support between both of our departments and the SCEE internal development teams upstairs. It's a great atmosphere – people here are friendly, creative and dedicated to their jobs. That's how we manage to produce great games like *Porsche*, *Total NBA* and *Rapid Racer*.

The working atmosphere is relaxed and informal. We don't hold a lot of official meetings on projects – just discuss them conversationally. It works well because we need to have rapid response to changing circumstances.

I'm very lucky that my position allows me to see all aspects of the business. Development, marketing and liaison with licensed publishers are all important for Special Projects. I often go out for meetings at other offices – recently to the new SCEI head offices in Tokyo. I see a lot of interesting stuff that unfortunately is confidential. I can only say that there are going to be some great games coming out in the next year.

I spend a lot of time looking at discs. These are often our own productions, or games which have been submitted to the Sony Approvals department. Occasionally it can get tedious when you have to check a demo disc for the fifth time – I don't know how people in QA manage. Sometimes I get interesting multimedia discs to look at on PC, which are often good for ideas on how to structure some of our own discs. I do a lot of thinking about how to improve our presentation and facilities, but Marketing often come up with good ideas as well. And it always takes longer than I think to put these ideas into practice.

Official closing time is 5:30. I often stay later, though I'm not fanatical about it. I've got a life – I just want to do a good job. Since I have 24-hour access with my electronic pass-key, I sometimes call into the office at weekends or bank holidays if there's an emergency. After work, I couldn't be better placed for pubs, clubs, restaurants, and nightlife generally, so I often meet friends or colleagues.'

ON THE JOB

Name: Richard Milner
Age: 35
Job: Producer of Special Products for Sony Computer Entertainment Europe
Salary: Basic, plus car allowance and an annual bonus
Hours: 9–5.30
Greats: A variety of creative and technical work, plus the people I work with
Grates: Deadlines come around so fast! I'd like to work on a really long-term development project
Your boss: Juan Montes, General Manager of SCEE Software Development
You're their boss: Three 3D graphic and animation artists, plus two programmers borrowed from Development Support

SUBJECT: LIFEFORCE TENKA aka JOEY
Highly agile and mobile operative. Can run, walk, jump, crawl and slide. Trademark: ultra violence.
ENVIRONMENTAL ISSUES: The first true multi-level 3D environment.
MISSION PROFILE: 28 in depth missions with puzzle solving and strategy elements.
WEAPON PROFILE: SG-26 Innovative Self-Generating Polymorphic Armoury Fitted with Laser Sight.
PROJECTILE WEAPONRY - APEX L -
Utilises low velocity armour piercing explosive rounds (depleted Uranium tipped) which can be fired at three different rates: Single Round, Semi-Automatic Burst, High Velocity Pathfinder.
PLASMA WEAPONRY - THE HAYMAKER -
Fusion powered laser system with dual diamond settings: Single, Dual and Burst fire.
EXPLOSIVE WEAPONRY
APAD - Anti Personnel Area Denial Munitions - MINE
Rocket - 2.8 hvapr - THE VAPOR - ROCKET
Grenade H2O FM - TERRADROP - GRENADE
MISSION PROFILE: 28 in depth missions with puzzle solving and strategy elements.
"Doom's flat, angular structure was okay at the time, but now Psygnosis has given gamers a world which exists on many levels...
...It creates a much more convincing environment."
Official PlayStation Jan 97 issue

WARNING - JOEY TENKA CAN SERIOUSLY DAMAGE YOUR HEALTH

GOVERNMENT HEALTH WARNING - ORDER 237PJD

SG-26 SELF GENERATING POLYMORPHIC ARMORY

PSYGNOSIS

PlayStation

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LIFEFORCE
TENKA

Psygnosis line-up

Psygnosis have long been some of the most prolific producers of PlayStation software and their line-up for '97 is more eclectic than ever. *PSM* take an early look...

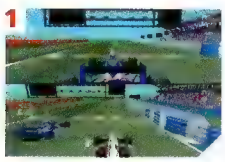
Formula One '97

- DEVELOPER: **Bizarre Creations**
- RELEASE DATE: **Sept/Oct '97**
- ORIGIN: **UK**

The original *Formula One* remains one of the most popular PlayStation games. Psygnosis are in the process of securing the official '97 licence and this has just been confirmed at the time of going to press. However Psygnosis can promise a host of new features and upgrades for the sequel. First things first, the '97 incarnation runs in hi-res – the visuals will be significantly improved. Also there is now both a vertical and horizontal two-player split-screen option, which certainly is good news indeed.

Again, there will be arcade and championship options, although the arcade section has been revamped to make for more spectacular driving – you can even powerslide. Add to this better weather effects, dual commentary and improved AI, and *F1 '97* should be a fine title. We'll be taking another look soon.

1



2

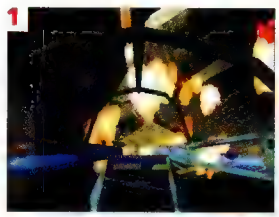
[1] The sequel to the epic *Formula One* features a two-player, split-screen option. [2] Producers Bizarre Creations have opted for a more spectacular arcade game, here.

Colony Wars

- DEVELOPER: **In-house**
- RELEASE DATE: **October '97**
- ORIGIN: **UK**

Colony Wars is a futuristic, first-person perspective, 3D combat game. The story is set in the distant future where two forces are locked in a bitter war over the colonies. You assume the role of a newly-recruited fighter pilot and must battle through a selection of missions. The action takes place in deep space and has a certain *Star Wars*-feel to it, with excellent laser fire and splendid explosions. The spaceships are crafted 3D models and the game is backed with a lush orchestral accompaniment. The non-linear missions number 70. First impressions are very positive.

1



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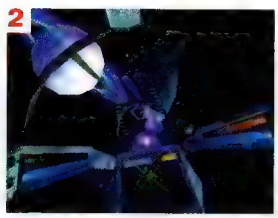


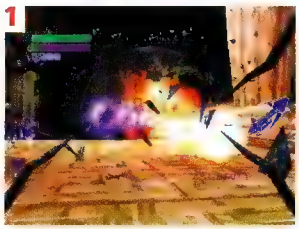
[1] *Colony Wars* is very much a PC-style shoot 'em up. The graphics, although simple, are beautifully realised. [2] Fly through outer space and shoot craft, why not?

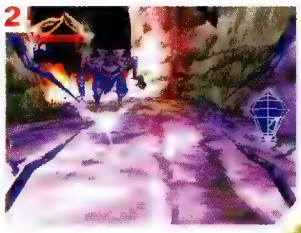
Shadow Masters

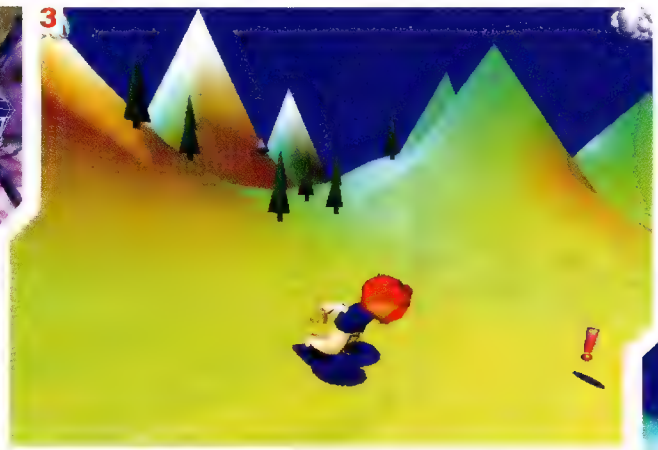
- DEVELOPER: **Tales 2**
- RELEASE DATE: **October '97**
- ORIGIN: **UK**

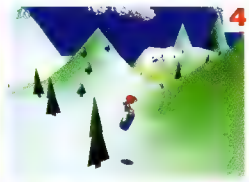
Shadow Masters is a 3D blast 'em up with a cunning number of puzzle-solving elements. The action takes place within seven different worlds set on a decaying planet and the visuals are based on the work of artist Rodney Matthews. Some plot: A dictator has changed all forms of life on the planet into mechanical monsters and basically, you hurtle around the

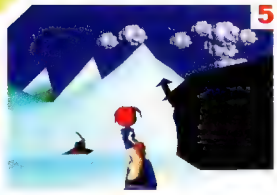
Kaboom! Expect far more spectacular collisions for '97.











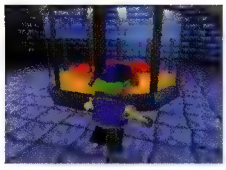
(1) *Shadow Masters* is reminiscent of *Tunnel B1* in that you hare around a 3D environment and shoot things. (2) Blast monsters and insects. (3, 4, 5) Here's the darned little *Rascal*.

shop blasting all manner of polygonal creepy crawlies. Our brief look revealed it to be furious fare.

As you progress through the worlds, so the monsters become more fearsome. You upgrade your weaponry by releasing energy from enemy pods. The manoeuvrable craft is similar in style to that of *Tunnel B1* – only there should be a bit more to go at here with 16 missions and innumerable baddies.

Rascal

DEVELOPER:	**Travellers Tales**
RELEASE DATE:	**November '97**
ORIGIN:	**UK**

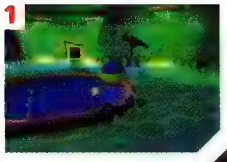


The little 'Rascal' character design is not yet finalised.

Here's an interesting cookie. *Rascal* is a platform game set in a free-roaming environment which, Psygnosis reckon, boasts 232,000 colours and runs at 60 frames per second. A real-time 3D platform game similar to *Mario 64* and *Sonic 3D*?

Rascal is the son of a scientist who has built a time machine. The cheeky fellow decides to give it a go and finds himself journeying through seven worlds, each with three time zones covering the past, present and future. There's also a medieval castle, a pirate ship, the wild west, atlantis and prehistoric areas to explore.

The main character could be designed by Jim Henson's Creature Workshop although the negotiations are still in its early stages. The visuals, however, do look very tasty even though many of the graphical touches have yet to be implemented. We'll be keeping a close eye...



(1) *Rascal* gets to run around in a full-on 3D environment. (2) The light sourcing and other visual effects are great.

Psybadek

DEVELOPER:	**In-house**
RELEASE DATE:	**November '97**
ORIGIN:	**UK**

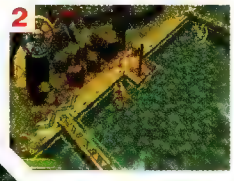
Psygnosis regard *Psybadek* as one of their top releases for 1997. It is, and pay attention, a 3D hoverdeck arcade platformer featuring the two main characters Xako and Mia (boy and girl, respectively) on the aforementioned flying boards. Both Xako and Mia have singular storylines which can lead them into different adventures, as they perform original stunts and gain access to differing secret bonus levels.

Psybadek is set in five worlds with 10 locations in total. The game is viewed in the third-person perspective, the action inspired by skateboarding and snowboarding. Unfortunately, this is one title that *PSM* has not seen up and running, but Psygnosis promise complete freedom of movement within the environment. There's an array of power-ups to collect and stunts to learn as you progress through the levels and tackle the bosses. Sounds fun.

Overboard!

DEVELOPER:	**In-house**
RELEASE DATE:	**October '97**
ORIGIN:	**UK**

Psygnosis' south-west office are producing the timber-shivering *Overboard!*, an ocean-going arcade puzzler. You take the helm of a galleon in search of long lost treasure. The action takes place in real-time 3D and the visuals are reckoned to give the ships convincing dynamics. There are five world regions from which to plunder bounty and en route you have to destroy ports and shipyards, keeping your own ship shape. The light progresses between night and day and there are end-of-level bosses to tackle, too. And Psygnosis promise a two-player death match option over 15 specially-designed levels. Don't go *Overboard!*



(1) Man *Overboard!* Plunder bounty over the seven seas. (2) The ship has realistic dynamics – get your sea legs. (3) *Overboard!* features a two-player, head-to-head game.

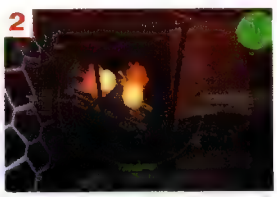
G-Police

Are you ready for one of the most intense, thrilling videogame experiences ever? Psygnosis reckon that this helicopter shoot 'em up is really pushing the envelope...

Psygnosis are the most successful UK-based producers and publishers of PlayStation games, with only Japanese giants Namco as peers. The Liverpool softco are pushing the boat out for '97 with some 10 titles due for release before the end of the year.

Mainly renowned for their racing titles, *Destruction Derby*, *Wipeout* and *Formula One*, Psygnosis are now producing games in a variety of genres.

G-Police, currently being coded in the company's Stroud office, is one of the year's most eagerly awaited titles. It's a flight-sim-based, hi-tec helicopter shoot 'em up situated in a futuristic, *Blade Runner*-esque cityscape and certainly set to be one of the PlayStation's most original titles. It's also the game that Psygnosis head honcho Ian Hetherington is bravely predicting as the Christmas number one.

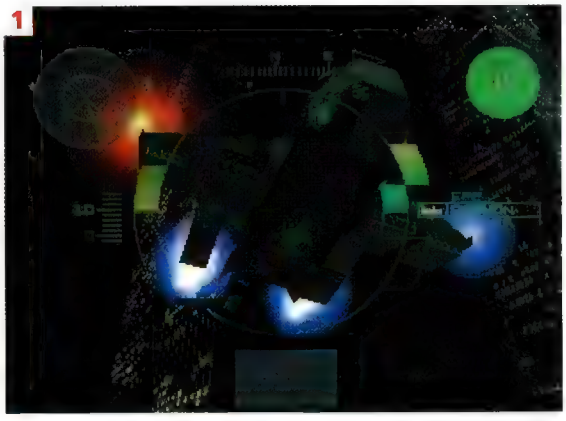


(1) *G-Police* is set in a dense, populated cityscape. (2) The impressive explosions are all light-sourced.

War in space

Let's have a little of the plot. The game is set in the now-familiar year of 2097. Earth's resources are somewhat depleted and there is a war in space with opposing nations fighting for ore-bearing rock on planets far and wide. Producer **Ross Thody** takes up the tale: 'The game is based on Callisto, one of Jupiter's moons. Technology has advanced to the point where humans are able to colonise our solar system. Vast, domed cities now litter the nearest planets and moons protecting their occupants from the harsh conditions outside. Callisto has been colonised with an aim to extract its great mineral wealth that lies deep below the surface'. Righteo, then.

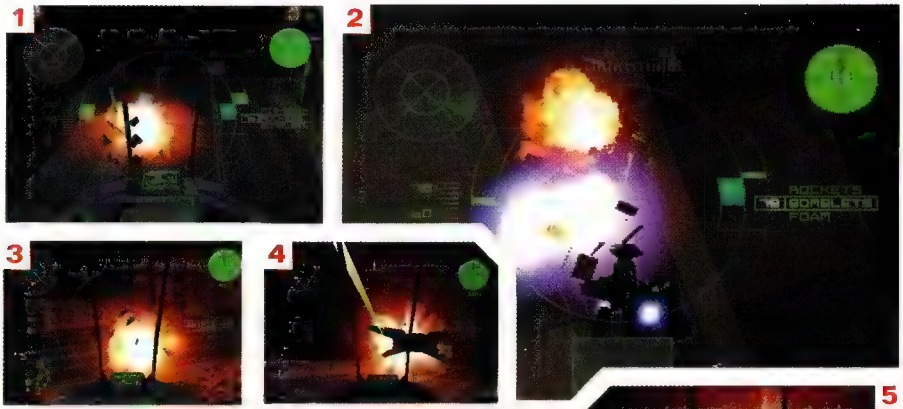
With multi-national corporations battling to exploit ever-decreasing resources, Earth forms a crack unit to control the colonies. 'Not the G-Police?', you cry, plaintively. Why, Sir, yes.



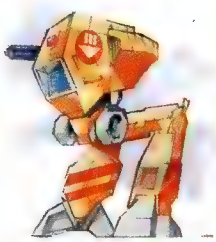
(1) *G-Police* combines the best elements of the flight simulator and shoot 'em up genres and drops the game in a *Blade Runner*-esque environment. (2) The Havoc helicopter is a highly-manoeuvrable craft which has some fine weapons.

You can battle intricate dogfights in busy streets, hovering just above the traffic while zooming beneath the walkways...

■ PUBLISHER:	**Psygnosis**	■ ORIGIN:	**UK**
■ DEVELOPER:	**In-house**	■ STYLE:	**Shoot 'em up**
■ RELEASE DATE:	**November**	■ PLAYERS:	**One**



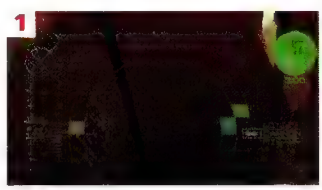
[1] The game is set in the year 2097, a time when the Earth's resources are limited and in the race to garner minerals from other planets, war breaks out in space. [2] Psygnosis are keen to ensure that the missions involve more than the standard 'seek and destroy' fare. [3] A lot of the action involves one-on-one dogfights. [4] You can upgrade your Havoc to a Venom. [5] And there she blows.

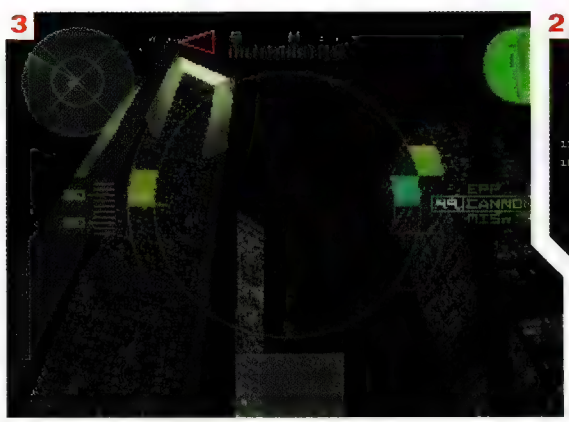


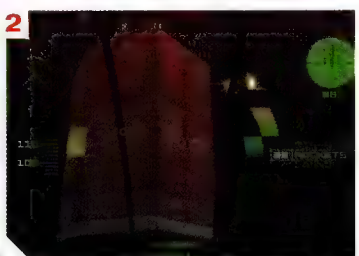
Psygnosis have swum lengths on the tale, because the plot relates closely to the situations the G-Police find themselves in, as Ross explains: 'The story is revealed to the player by impressive FMV sequences which use motion-capture technology and Silicon Graphics workstations to produce some of the best computer-generated work ever seen in a game.

'The story line of *G-Police* was originally written by a professional script writer but was adapted to suit the game structure. This meant that the script and missions were developed to complement one another – you won't find out how it ends until you reach the outro'. The FMV sequences are fine, indeed. In fact, the characters therein look almost human, such is the attention to detail.

G-Police is an idea that has been kicking around for a while. Ross had a few thoughts about how the game should play even before *Assault Rigs*, the Stroud office's first PlayStation title. 'The members of the development team had worked on flight simulators prior to *G-Police*, and as a rule the landscapes would be flat and featureless', explains Ross. 'The team thought it would be cool to fly around a dense city environment. The idea sounded exciting but we needed to put in a number of restrictions, such as how to stop the player from ▶

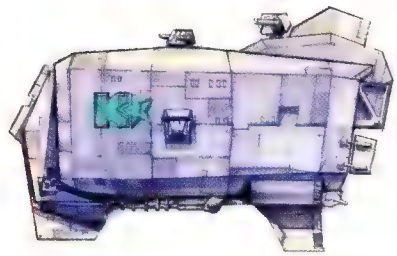


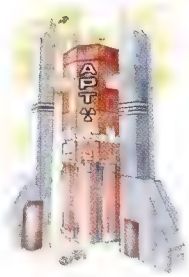


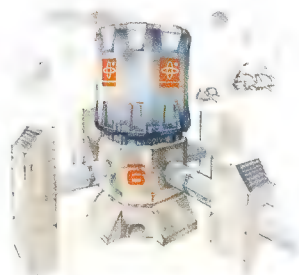


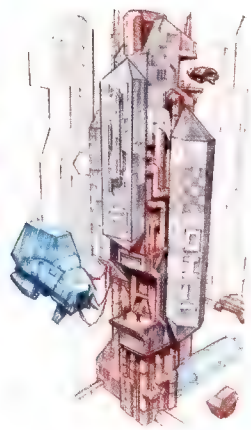
[1] The realtime 3D environment is incredibly intense, with huge skyscrapers and busy traffic. [2] The Havoc helicopter has a 'hover' facility which enables you to shoot more accurately. [3] Check out the altimeter.

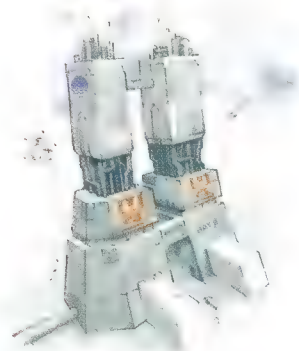
A design for life









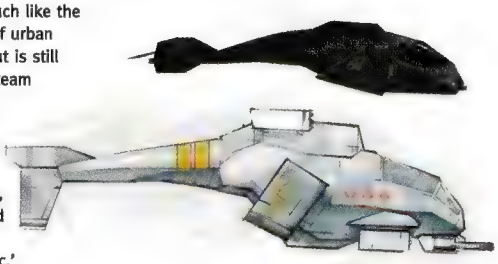


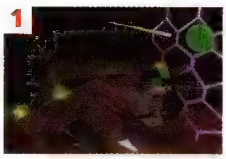
G-Police is influenced by many games, and the producers wanted to take the best elements of the flight sim and shoot 'em up. Psygnosis reckon that it takes quite a bit of practice to get used to controlling the helicopter, but it's all part of the learning process.

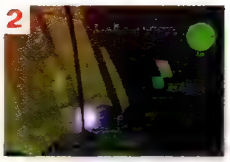
G-Police

Causing Havoc

As a G-Cop, you patrol the city skies in a Havoc helicopter, a highly-manoeuvrable vector thrust gunship, much like the helicopter gunships of today. The Havoc's agility makes it the only choice for the airborne policing of urban areas, full of high-rise docks and skyscrapers. The Havoc is nearing the end of its service life but is still the best ship for the job, until the arrival of the Venom. The Venom is another craft but the team are staying tight-lipped about this machine. Producer Ross Thody explains the benefits of the Havoc. 'It has a vast array of weaponry, ranging from the Vulcan cannon to a devastating Plasma launcher, then there's the 1000kg bomb which'll also bring down buildings. As you progress, more weapons become available. All the civilian traffic is vulnerable to your weaponry, so when firing unguided rockets at ground targets, be careful you don't trash that school bus! Don't worry, you wont be reprimanded too badly. The G-Police know how tough it is out there! Don't get too cocky, though – your enemies have military hardware far more powerful than your Havoc.'





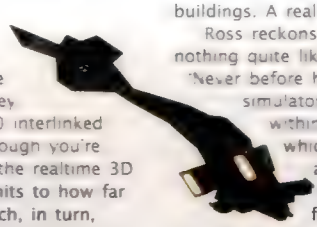


[1] The domes are enclosed so you don't end up flying around in no-man's land. [2] The action takes place in the streets.

▶ flying away from the city. If the cities were based in domes then the player could be kept within the cityscape. The cities were built in domes to protect them from the harsh environments of other worlds.'

3D cities

The producers have cleverly moulded the plot to suit the environment. Because the people need protection from the harsh elements, they have built some 50 interlinked domes, so even though you're free to fly around the realtime 3D cities, there are limits to how far you can travel which, in turn, ensures that the missions are a mite more succinct. The domes themselves are amazing. Each is a densely populated 3D city surrounded by bridges, skyscrapers, roads and transport vehicles – the traffic is controlled through artificial intelligence.

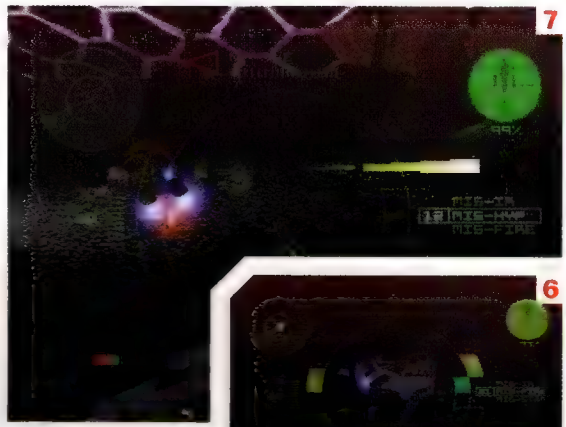


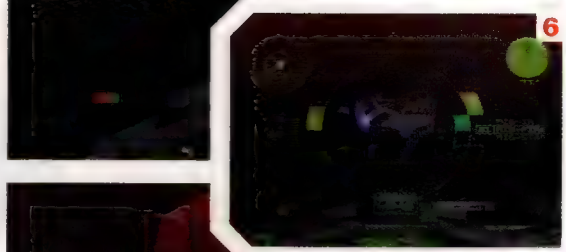
One of the great aspects of the game is that the action occurs within the structure of the city rather than above it, so you feel much more involved in the game. You can battle intricate dogfights in busy streets, hovering just above the traffic while zooming beneath the walkways and negotiating the buildings. A real buzz.

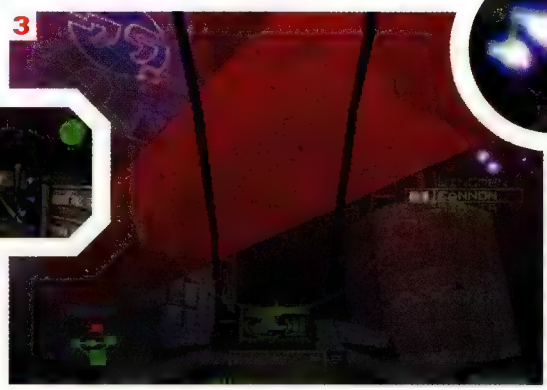
Ross reckons that there is nothing quite like *G-Police*. 'Never before has a flight simulator been based within a cityscape which is as complex as the *G-Police* environment. The flight model of the Havoc is unique and has incredible manoeuvrability – in the right hands. The in-game visuals and pyrotechnics are some of the most stunning effects seen in a computer game.'

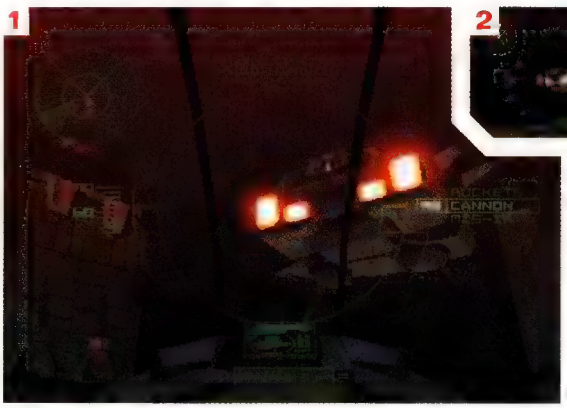
G-Police looks set to be one of the most intense and atmospheric experiences in videogaming and we'll be following its progress closely in the coming months.

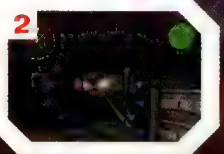
'Never before has a flight simulation been based within a cityscape which is as complex as the *G-Police* environment'

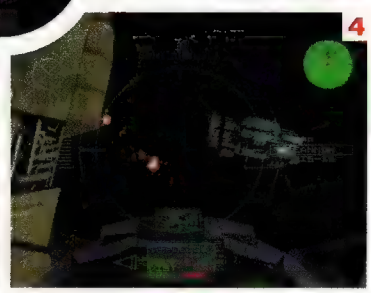












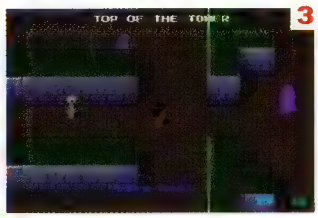
[1] You're free to fly around the realtime 3D domes and destroy as many things as you like. [2] And the on-screen read-outs keep you up-to-date with mission briefings and weaponry. [3] The pedestrian walkways in the city provide obstacles for the Havoc chopper. [4] The atmosphere is very *Blade Runner*-esque. [5] Twenty five rockets left before you go for the 1000kg bomb. [6] Every dome will be full of traffic and enemies. [7] Hit them where it hurts.

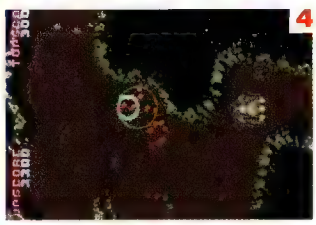
Museum Volume 4

Let's go retro

Part 4

Well, you've had your *Galaxians*, your *Pac-Mans* and the rest. Namco's fourth incarnation will harbour the most unusual selection yet...





[1] The familiar Namco typeface features in *Pac-Land*, as does *Pac-Man*. [2] Shoot under water in *Ordyne*. [3] *Ishtar* looks grand but it's rather baffling. [4] Command a tank in *Assault*.

[1] *Ordyne* is too darned hard. [2] *Genji* is a side scrolling hack 'n' slash.

This is the fourth and penultimate collection of Namco's 'classic' coin-ops from a by-gone age. The three previous incarnations have been patchy, to say the least, and it's unlikely that this selection will alter the perception that Namco could have produced a couple of splendid compilations rather than five somewhat mouldy fellows. Still, let's bash on regardless.

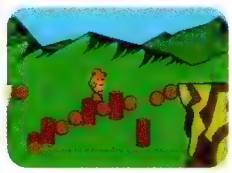
There are five to play here, with *Pac-Land* and *Assault* probably the most impressive. Also dressed for the occasion are *Ordyne*, *Ishtar* and *Genji*. *Assault* is a *Battlezone*-esque tanking shoot 'em up – simple gameplay, but very effective. The screen is somewhat narrow but gamers have been known to turn their televisions sideways for a fuller effect. A gaming stalwart.

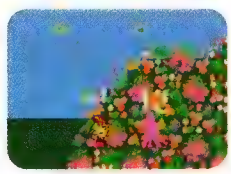
Pac-Land is 'the-next-one-on-from-the-last', and a heck of a tough task at that. It's a radically different game from the previous pill-chewing affairs, with the emphasis on platform-hopping. If you can make it to level three, you'll be going some.

Although shoot 'em up *Ordyne* has been around for the best part of a decade, it still looks excellent. Having said that, the cute graphics can't mask the fact that *Ordyne* can be a painful experience with the opposition armed to the hilt. Progress is very much dependent on your ability to garner power-ups.

Roll yer bones on over *The Return Of Ishtar*, an unusual role-playing, wander-around-a-maze scenario. It's incredibly complex and you have to control two characters at once, collect keys and shift off into other rooms.

And lastly there's *The Genji And The Heike Clans*, a side-scrolling slash 'em up which you can view from two different angles and a game most definitely designed for the Japanese market. *Volume 4* is the most eclectic selection to date and one which will probably appeal to die-hard gamers only. We'll be reviewing the PAL version just as soon as it drops on the mat.





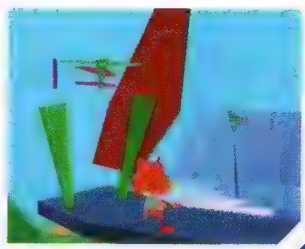
***Pac-Land* sees the little yellow fellow getting involved in platform antics – and less of the pill chewing.**

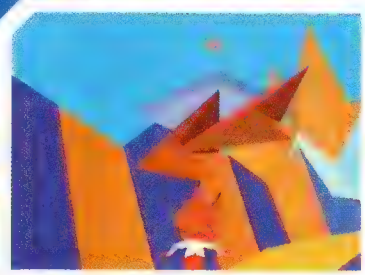
■ PUBLISHER:	SCEE	■ RELEASE DATE:	June	■ PLAYERS:	One or two
■ DEVELOPER:	Namco	■ ORIGIN:	Japan	■ STYLE:	Classic coin-ops

Bubsy 3D

Missing Lynx

Just like a real cat, Bubsy disappeared out of the cat-flap six months ago and hasn't been seen since. But he's back and ready for release. Let's see what he's been up to...



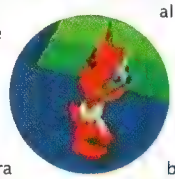


***Bubsy 3D* falls into the same sort of category as *Mario 64* as you wander around a 3D world, with the camera following your every move from behind. The movement, however, seems a long way from its Nintendo counterpart.**

It was a full six months ago when we first looked at the 3D makeover of Bubsy, one-time platform hero of the 16-bit consoles. Here we are, half a year later, and while little has changed in gameplay terms, we can at least announce a firm release date of June 26.

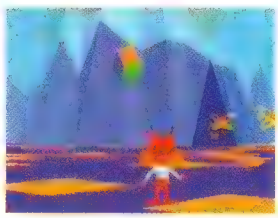
The last six months haven't seen the game sitting on a programmer's shelf somewhere, though. The time, we're reliably informed, has been spent ironing out bugs and ensuring the product is ready for release.

For those who missed our first look at the game, it's a solid-looking 3D affair which, if you wanted to pigeonhole it, would rest in the same compartment as Nintendo's *Mario 64*. The main Bubsy character is viewed from behind as he runs, jumps and flies around the game worlds, triggering switches, entering teleports and bouncing on the enemies (called Woolies). And like *Mario 64*, there's a similar camera system which you can use to look freely around and figure out what to do next.



When we first reported on the game we told you that there were 16 large levels. As it turns out, there are now 18 plus an extra bonus level. Also, as reported before the game features a simultaneous two-player option in which you can play head-to-head against a friend. The most recent version we've played has all the front-end screens and pre-rendered cut scenes and seems pretty much 100 per cent complete.

You can find out our final verdict next month, but indications at this stage are that, in graphical terms at least, the game has character. Success will depend on whether the developers have managed to get Bubsy to interact effectively with his surroundings.



As you can see from the graphics and the style of game, *Bubsy 3D* may be far more appealing to younger players, much as in its 16-bit days.

■ PUBLISHER:	Telstar	■ RELEASE DATE:	June	■ PLAYERS:	One
■ DEVELOPER:	Accolade	■ ORIGIN:	UK	■ STYLE:	3D platformer

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All Star Soccer

Six Million dollar men

Imagine if you could combine, say, the guts of Gazza with the brains of Bergkamp? You can create any player you like in this lighthearted take on the football game, from Eidos Interactive

(1) Are you blind, ref? That must be a penalty. (2) Another stunning sliding tackle from the boy in red. (3) The game finally gets out of hand when the referee lashes out.

To release a footie game on to the market at the moment would be madness unless it came with a really good gimmick. Fortunately for Eidos Interactive it looks like they've found such a gismo for their latest soccer sim, *All Star Soccer*.

Perhaps the best way to describe the game is a sort of cross between *Soccer '97* and *The Six Million Dollar Man: All Star* mixes the gaming aspect of the former with the clever body-reconstruction technique of the latter. When you start the game you can choose to build a team from scratch, or play with one of the prepared teams. If you decide to build a team, you have total power to change anything about the players. So if your player can't head properly or run fast enough, simply take him to the body shop and replace his head or legs with something better.

Made to order

Each body part has set attributes and styles. For example, the choice of player head will determine mental attributes, skill, anticipation and aggression. Different legs will offer different speeds, acceleration, power and stamina, to name but a few. Once you're happy with your players, you can form a team and start to play against the likes of the Sophia Wrens or the Amsterdam Dykes. Not the best names, you must agree, but their shirts look nice.

When finally you get close to playing the game, there's a comprehensive range of game options, including friendlies, league, cup, and mini cup. During the game you can decide what style of play you want, as well as the formation, player coverage, marking, and so on. There are countless choices – perhaps too many – but if you're not bothered about changing your team or your tactics, you can go straight to the action.

Rather than opt for the high realism of games like *FIFA '97*, and all the associated problems, the developers have decided to give the *3D Studio*-designed players a more cartoon-like feel. And to add to the comic approach, they've also got well-known sporting impersonator Alistair McGowan to commentate as Brooking, Hansen, Keegan and many more famous sportscasters.

What all this means for the gameplay we're not sure, having played *All Star* only briefly. We'll deliver a thorough PlayTest as soon as we get a completed version.

(1) The crowd get excited as Disco Boy gets ready to take a free kick. (2) A goal-mouth scramble – could get interesting. (3) A good bit of humpty dumpty in the middle of the park.

■ PUBLISHER: **Eidos Interactive** ■ RELEASE DATE: **June** ■ PLAYERS: **Eight players**

■ DEVELOPER: **In-house** ■ ORIGIN: **UK** ■ STYLE: **Footie sim**

now you can play your premier team

Actua Soccer is universally recognised as the greatest football game ever. Here is just one of many testimonials:

"The best footy game around. It's almost like playing the real thing. Beautiful."

Five Star Rating - Essential Playstation

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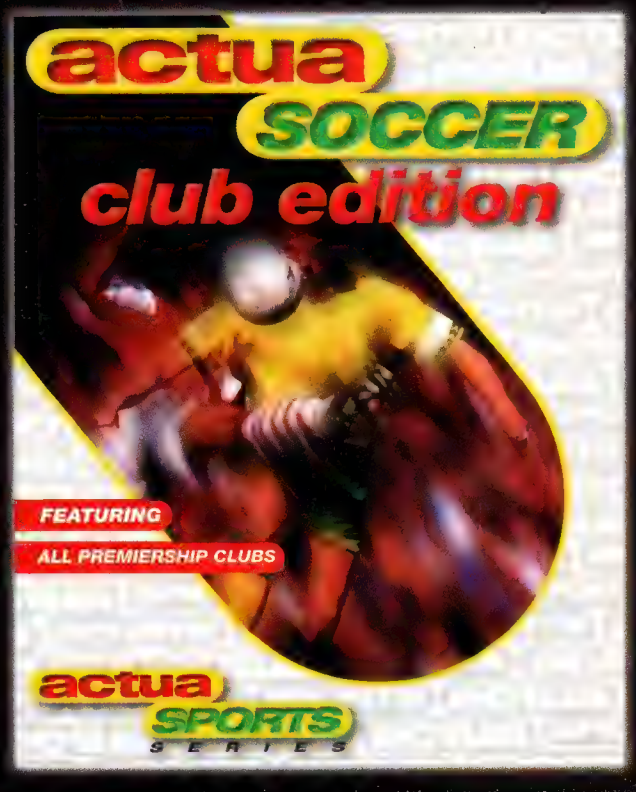

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French Connection

The PlayStation has the best to offer in every games department. Only *Sega Rally* looms large, but French coders Infogrames are set to put the record straight...

As Monday afternoons go, it ain't half bad. Ocean have invited *PSM* to the Catalonian rally in Barcelona ('a muddy track just outside the centre', reckons the public relations fellow from the Manchester softco) to see Infogrames' new racing game, *V-Rally*. And yet just 90 minutes after the plane lands, we find ourselves supping a cheeky refresher on Lloret de Mar beach, with the sun shining bright and pedallos jiggling across the bay. Ho, and indeed, hum.

The Spanish seaside resort in question is where the Rallye of Catalunya (let's be correct, here) starts and finishes each night. Before the cars arrive on the promenade after a hard day's racing, the teams are given 45 minutes to repair any faults and this extends the opportunity for them to clean and polish the cars before they parade afore enthusiasts and holiday makers (mainly retired Germans at this time of year) alike. Of course, the

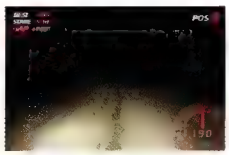
There's a level of realism not seen in any racing game, bar *F1* and the efforts of Geoff Crammond

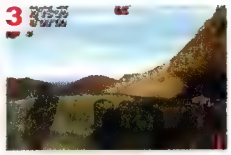
(1) There's a fine vertical and horizontal split-screen option. (2) You'll have to drive in testing conditions. (3) Wow. The headlamp effects look quite superb.

Here's a car in Lloret de Mar

And who, indeed, are we to complain if Lyons-based Infogrames wish to demonstrate *V-Rally* on the promenade at Lloret de Mar. Thousands of rally fans were afforded the opportunity to test-drive the game in an arcade-style setting on one of the rally stands. Some of the cars were PlayStation-sponsored.

■ PUBLISHER:	**Ocean**	■ ORIGIN:	**France**
■ DEVELOPER:	**Infogrames**	■ STYLE:	**Rally racer**
■ RELEASE DATE:	**July**	■ PLAYERS:	**One to four**





(1) *V-Rally* has a vast array of officially-licensed cars which are reckoned to handle realistically. (2) Here's a Mitsubishi, the game's fastest car, in all kinds of trouble. (3, 4) The courses are based on real rallies. In Corsica, you hurtle through mountains and towns.

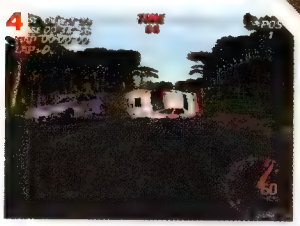
main benefit of this is so that we can see the sponsors' logos – and looking at the cars, you'd hardly believe they'd left the showroom.

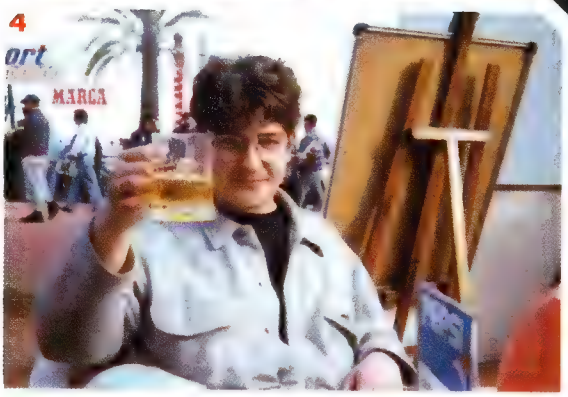
V-Realistic

Along the sea front is a host of sponsors stands, selling rally paraphernalia. One such stand, however, is dark and enclosed. Inside are four hastily-put-together arcade-style rally cars, each facing a screen. Folk inside are enthusiastically twitching at Gamester steering wheels, battling it out to see who can be first in *V-Rally*. It's not a finished version of the game, by any means, but impressive nevertheless, running at pace and with quite the most sensational graphics seen yet on a PlayStation racer. In fact, it already feels like a coin-op racer, especially in this environment.

V-Rally was originally conceived by French producer Stephane Baudet some two years ago. It was meant to be an *F1* game but when Infogrames realised that there was a multitude of companies after the official FIA licence, they canned the idea. But by this time the engine was up and running, so they opted to produce a rally game – an area sadly neglected in the PlayStation arena. And just think how many Saturns have ▶

V-Rally





(1) *V-Rally's* technical consultant, former racing champ Ari Vatanen, demonstrates how to drive without a steering wheel. (2) The cars can negotiate the corners on two wheels. (3) Infogrames have worked to get the crash dynamics just so. (4) Producer Stephane. (5) A Renault?

Perhaps the best thing is that up to four can play, using a link cable. Two can play split-screen...

▶ been sold simply on the basis of *Sega Rally*.

Infogrames chose to eschew Sony's libraries because they couldn't provide enough speed for the game. And in *V-Rally* there's a level of realism not seen in any racing game, bar the *F1* efforts of Bizarre Creations and Geoff Crammond.

'The dynamics of the cars are really amazing,' explains **Stephane Dupais**, *V-Rally's* UK-based producer. 'It's something that really matters for us – being as realistic as possible – simply because driving a rally car is one of the most enjoyable things to do. And we think that having a lot of cars and tracks is definitely responding to a demand in the market. We do believe that it will mean a lot more fun at the end of the day.'

Infogrames are certainly keen to stress the 'realism' factor in *V-Rally*. So much so, they acquired the services of a Finnish rally champion. Dupais is enthusiastic about the results. 'Ari Vatanen helped us in several ways', he points out. 'He told us how to select the optimal internal viewing angle – the one that is more true to reality. We had put it far too low and the game was difficult because you couldn't see much of the oncoming turns. Vatanen also gave us a lot of details about the handling of the cars – oversteer, understeer, braking, power, and so on. Last but not least, he gave us his opinion about the tracks themselves and especially the backgrounds.'

There are some 42 tracks in all (phew), split between 24 for the eight races in Championship mode and 18 in the Arcade section, which features easy, medium and hard options. There are differing geographical areas (Corsica, England and Africa) which include a variety of terrain; mountain, desert, jungle, forest and town. However, of the 42 courses, many are the same, only split by weather and time-of-day conditions.

The cars themselves are the eight official vehicles from the 1997 championships (Lancia,

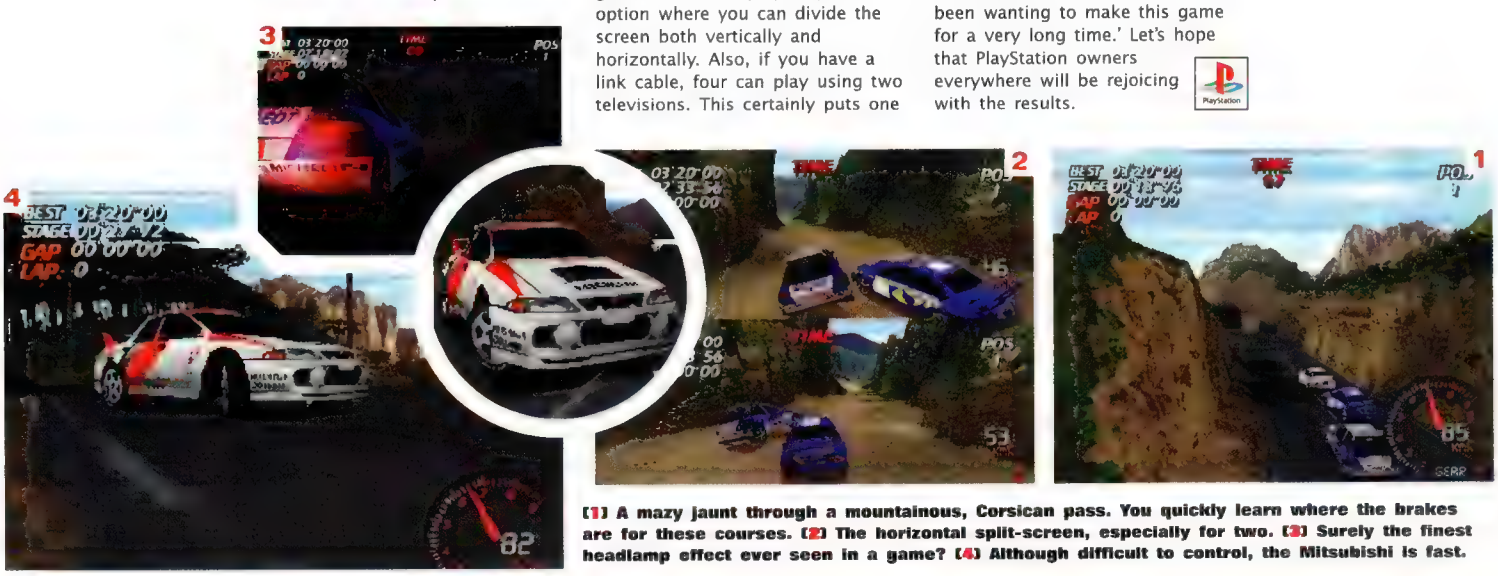
Rally to the chequered flag

***V-Rally* features eight officially-licensed cars from the World Rally Championships and two hidden ones for the successful driver. Let us try and identify these fellows from left to right: Peugeot, Renault, Ford Escort, Mitsubishi and Seat. Infogrames used the manufacturers' specifications for the modelling.**

Renault, Peugeot and Mitsubishi among others) and each is better suited to the variety of conditions and courses you encounter.

The cars are made up of some 300 polygons and Infogrames assure us that the game will not drop below 25 frames per second no matter how many cars are on screen. And they're also minimising the 'pop-up' of scenery as the cars skate along.

V-Rally should be one of THE games this year, providing Infogrames strike the right balance between realism and playability. Perhaps the best asset for the game is the two player split-screen option where you can divide the screen both vertically and horizontally. Also, if you have a link cable, four can play using two televisions. This certainly puts one over on many PlayStation racers and it's an essential feature if Infogrames want to wrestle *Sega Rally's* crown. 'It took us two years to complete the production', Stephane points out, 'but, in a way, you can say that it took many years to think, create and design *V-Rally*, as most of the team have been wanting to make this game for a very long time.' Let's hope that PlayStation owners everywhere will be rejoicing with the results.

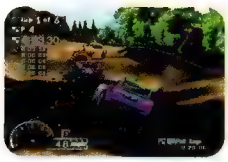


[1] A mazy jaunt through a mountainous, Corsican pass. You quickly learn where the brakes are for these courses. [2] The horizontal split-screen, especially for two. [3] Surely the finest headlamp effect ever seen in a game? [4] Although difficult to control, the Mitsubishi is fast.

Rally Cross

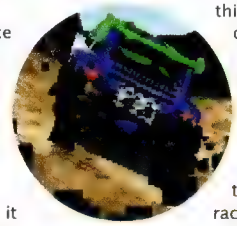
RALLY BRILLIANT

We're already spoilt for choice when it comes to racing games on the PlayStation, and it's only getting better



Chunky. That's the word that comes to mind when you first see *Rally Cross* in action. Big, chunky cars screaming round big, chunky courses tearing up the ground and spattering everything with mud, are the flavour of the day. *Rally Cross* isn't concerned with the niceties of life; it's an ugly child who wants to play rough.

This game doesn't bear much resemblance to what we think of as rally racing in Europe. This isn't about hacking through Scandinavian forests in the middle of the night; this is more Paris-Dakar than it is RAC. The courses are rough and ready, with huge banks to climb up, ramps to fly off and there's a collection of ruggedly indestructible cars. Until you start to get used to controlling your rally car, you'll be spending half the time the wrong way up as your car somersaults to a standstill.



The game comes with all the usual racing game options that we've come to know and love: four different camera angles put you anywhere from way behind the car to right in the driving seat; there are a range of courses that expand as you win things and you can choose from a variety of cars with different characteristics. What *Rally Cross* has that you don't always see in its competitors, however, is the ability to play ordinary straight races and the option to play head-to-head races, where you and the competition are going different ways around the same course. And where it really begins to score points is in the four-player option. It's taken developers some time to come up with racing games that really take advantage of the multi-tap, which is a shame because there's so much fun to be had in taking on your friends in some tyre-scorching action.

(1) Wahay! The slightest little bump and you're flying through the air. It's a bit easy to tip over, though. (2) Look at that mud flying up.

So finally we've got the total action we've wanted. Providing *Rally Cross* manages to pull it off properly, we could have *the* multi-player racer on our hands.

Aside from the excitement of multi-player racing, though, what does *Rally Cross* have to offer? Well, it's hard to describe quite how exhilarating *Rally Cross* is to play – you're gonna have to wait for a demo before really appreciating that – but suffice it to say that if you choose the in-car camera view and start to really belt around one of the six

One, two, er, four

It's really great to be able to play with up to four players, though there is some slowdown.

■ PUBLISHER:	**SCEE**	■ ORIGIN:	**United States**
■ DEVELOPER:	**SCEA**	■ STYLE:	**Racing game**
■ RELEASE DATE:	**June**	■ PLAYERS:	**One to four**

courses (all of which have various optional layouts, too) you'll be gobsmacked. Nothing we've seen conveys quite so cleverly the feeling of being inside a car that's driving around the sort of course that only a lunatic would take pleasure from, at speeds that would make Damon Hill sweat.

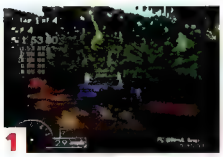
Part of the pleasure comes from the excellent sound. After you've flown through the air and landed with a bump, the suspension squeaks alarmingly. And if you manage to ram one of your competitors head-on, there's a most satisfying crunch; a crunch that has you rocking back in your seat as if you'd just been involved in a real crash.

Rally Cross seems to have beaten some of the other racing games in the difficulty stakes too: this game is seriously hard. On the wussie rookie level, you're hard-pressed to keep the car upright for your first few goes. With time, though, comes enlightenment. Before long you'll be tapping the brakes for power-slides and gunning your way out of trouble. You're going to have to learn the courses before you can properly appreciate them; but once you start to do that, you also start to rapidly improve.

Rally Cross has a sensible range of fully configurable joypad controls too, including the option to rock the car from side to side – which is what you'll have to do to get it the right way up again.

Visually, the courses are really good-looking, with desert, island, rocky mining areas, and others to traverse. The difference in these courses is marked as well – scuffing through sand on the desert course (the first) is far easier than sliding around on the wet rock of the mines course.

If *Rally Cross* fulfils the expectations it has aroused, we could well be looking at one of the finest racing games on the PlayStation – or indeed any other machine.



1

2

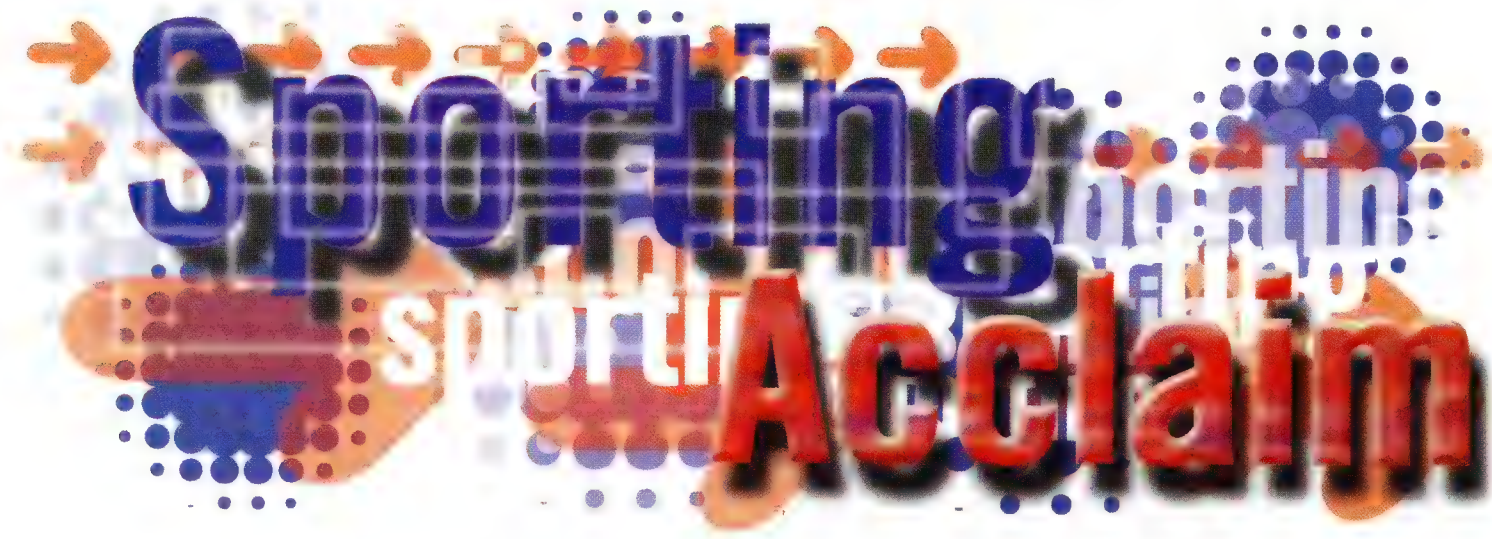
3

(1, 2, 3) Things can get tricky, especially when some blackguard gets in the way.

Under starter's orders

Choose your steed from any of the following all-terrain jobs:

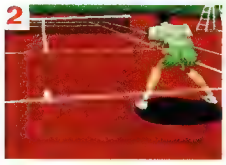
Acclaim line-up



Acclaim get ready for some outdoor sporting action with a virtual tennis game and a new baseball sim featuring Frank 'Big Hurt' Thomas

V-Tennis

PUBLISHER:	Acclaim
DEVELOPER:	In-house
RELEASE DATE:	End of May
ORIGIN:	United States



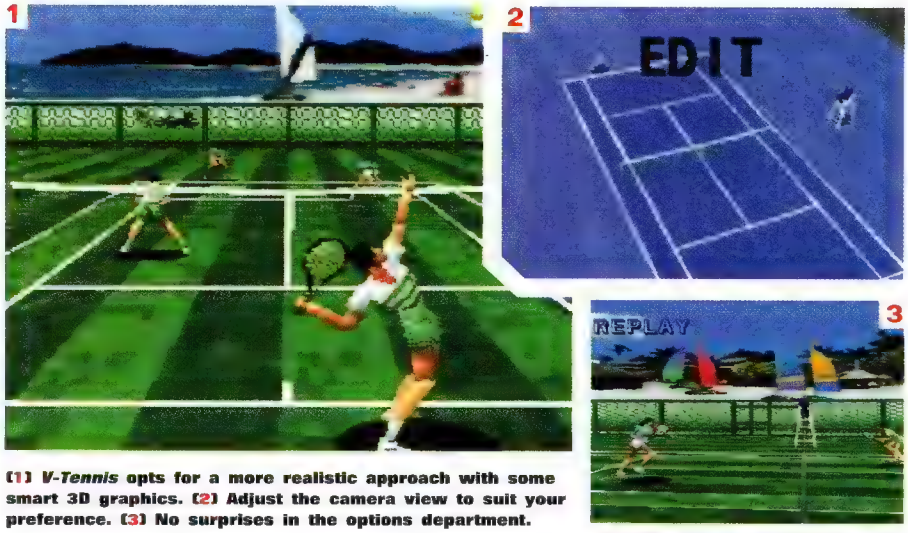
(1) Choose from one of many players with differing abilities, or take a blank sheet and create your own. (2) There are clay, grass, hard and indoor court services. Obviously each will play at varying pace.

We can simulate the feel of driving a Porsche, we can create beat 'em ups that contain ridiculously complex moves and combos. We can even recreate accurately the Beautiful Game. So why is it so hard to recreate a sport in which a tiny ball simply travels back and forth? To date the only tennis game to have delivered any fun is *Smash Court Tennis*.

Ah well, another challenger enters the fray. Acclaim's *V-Tennis* promises top-notch tennis action of a quality never before seen. Glancing at the list of features, it'll surprise no one to learn that there *are* no surprises. You have singles, you have doubles (with up to four human players taking part), you have men's and women's championships, a world championship, one-off games and a selection of players with wildly differing abilities. One novel feature, though, is the Edit mode in which you can create up to five customised players to save on to memory card.

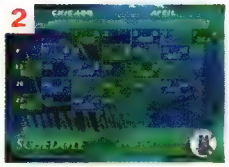
Continuing the predictability, there are a number of locations to play in, as well as hard, lawn, clay and indoor carpet surfaces to play on. The only thing worthy of note at this stage is the look of the game. Namco's *Smash Court* uses the cutesy Japanese look to achieve its aims. *V-Tennis* hopes to introduce a more realistic game with a 3D court and polygonal players. One result of this is being able to choose one of many camera views – there's even a smart Edit option which allows you to adjust the camera view to your individual taste. Gameplay involves the usual lob, spin and slice options which are accessed via a combination of button presses and proximity to the ball.

So, we're looking at a decidedly different experience to *Smash Court* and one whose rise or fall will depend on the quality of the gameplay alone. Once more we ask for your patience until we can assess the game's potential classic/turkey status in our forthcoming review.



(1) *V-Tennis* opts for a more realistic approach with some smart 3D graphics. (2) Adjust the camera view to suit your preference. (3) No surprises in the options department.

One novel feature is the Edit mode which lets you create up to five customised players



(1) The Americans just love their statistics and *ASB* has the lot. (2) Here's Chicago's schedule for '97.

All Star Baseball '97

■ PUBLISHER:	**Acclaim**
■ DEVELOPER:	**In-house**
■ RELEASE DATE:	**End of May**
■ ORIGIN:	**United States**

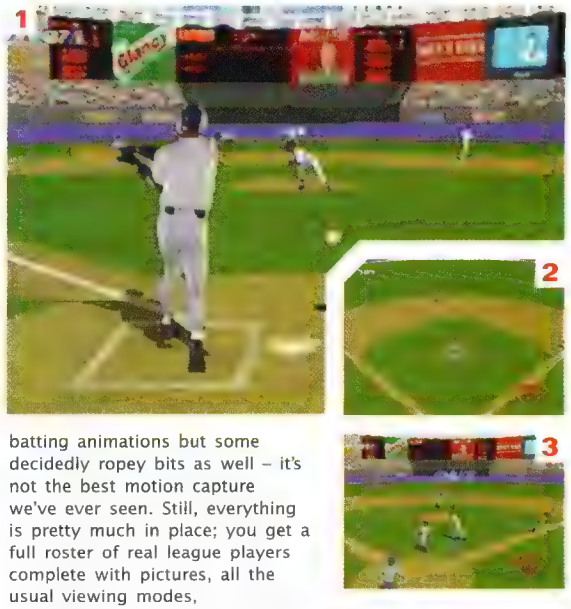
Clearly there's a solid following for baseball in the UK because, for many years now, there's been a constant trickle of baseball console games drifting on to the market. This latest, from Acclaim, features the '96-'97 fixtures and is fronted by Major League Baseball's top hitter, Frank Thomas – known as Big Hurt. A whole industry has sprung up around the geezer and Big Hurt Enterprises Inc makes not inconsiderable sums of moolah on the strength of its namesake's popularity. The Big Hurt moniker is unsurprising. Even with a 19-game absence in the '96 season due to injury, he was still ranked second and managed to rack up 40 home runs and 134 runs. He also donates money to charity. The relevance? Well, this sporting legend and all-round nice guy is huge, and as a result we expect a baseball sim that carries his name to be pretty special also.

Visually *All Star*'s a mixed bag with some nice pitching and batting animations...

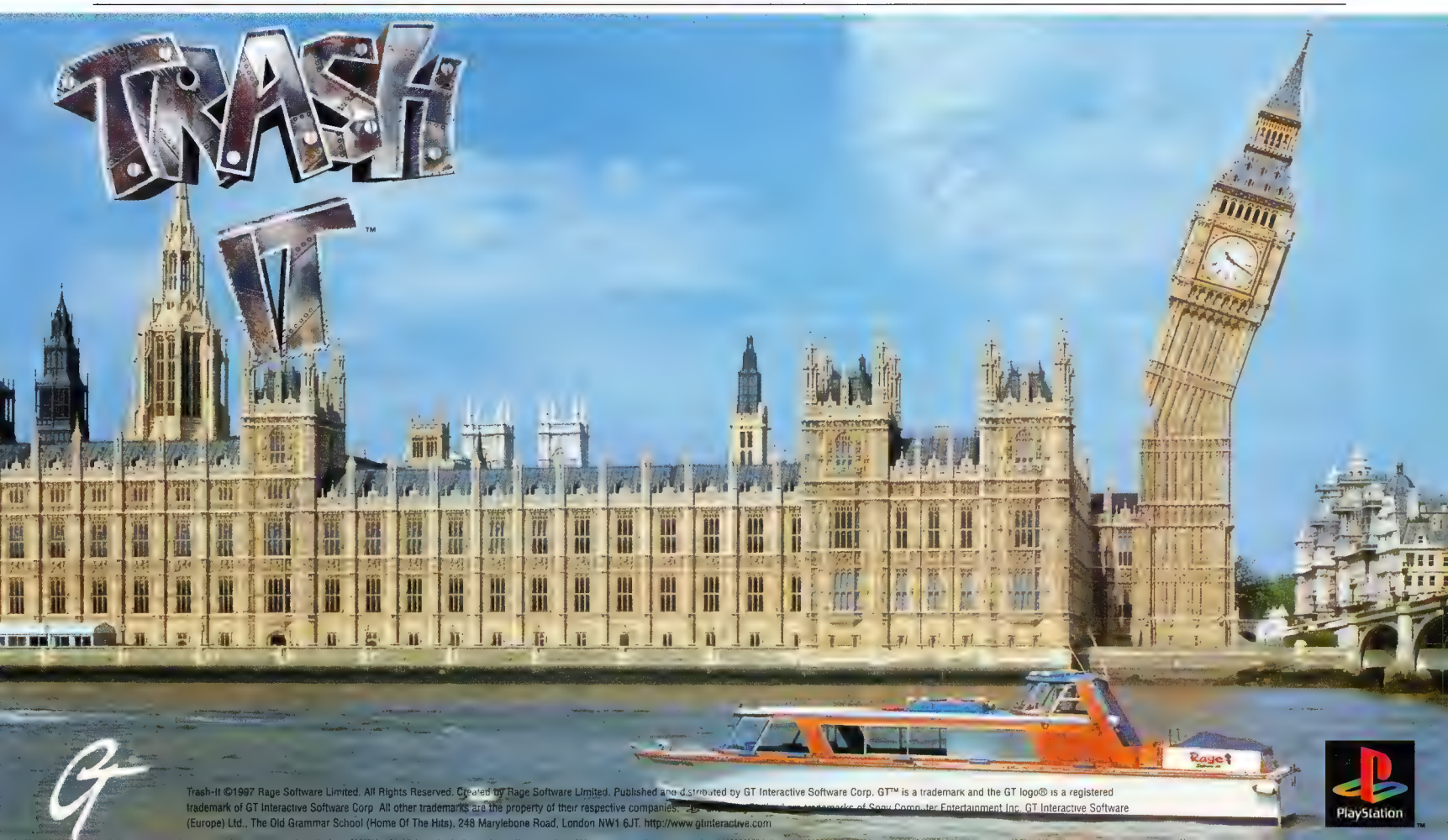
The game's only 70 per cent complete at the moment and while this manifests itself in poor commentary and some ludicrous loading times, there's enough finished gameplay in there to indicate a quality translation of America's favourite sport.

As you would expect, there are several play modes: Exhibition matches, Play-offs, Full Seasons and All Star games are included, as well as the now-familiar Quickplay option in which you get abridged rules, including one strike and you're out.

The gameplay itself is nothing extraordinary, although the controls are perhaps a little more intuitive than some other baseball sims you may have played. Visually *All Star*'s a bit of a mixed bag, with some nice pitching and batting animations but some decidedly ropey bits as well – it's not the best motion capture we've ever seen. Still, everything is pretty much in place; you get a full roster of real league players complete with pictures, all the usual viewing modes, commentary from Jon Miller (he's a famous broadcaster in the States) and the promise that each player's vital statistics will translate on-screen into the most realistic games ever. We shall see.



(1) Another motion-captured swing misses. (2) You can view the action from many angles. (3) Is the 'Big Hurt' out yet again? Walk, Frank.



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Win!

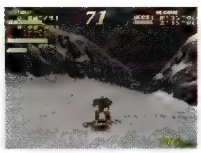
TWO brilliant customised Sony PlayStation snowboards up for grabs, together **with 10 copies of *Cool Boarders*** for the runners-up

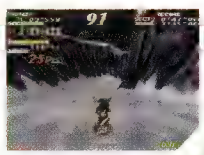
Now then, you fashionable young things.

Snowboarding is terribly trendy these days – just ask Jamiroquai – and the good denizens at Sony have deemed that we should proffer two of the very vehicles that one requires when one is hurtling downhill on the white powdery stuff. Best of all, the said modes of transport have 'PlayStation' written upon them. Yes, for these are *custom-made snowboards* – we won't even bore you with the details of their fiscal worth because, friends, and dear readers, **YOU CANNOT BUY THEM IN THE SHOPS.**

However, those shy of the slopes will be pleased to learn that we also have 10 copies of the Sony-sponsored *Day Tripper* (it took you so long, to find out, but you found out) snowboarding videos to give away and, last but not least, 10 copies of *Cool Boarders* the snowboarding computer game. To give away, of course. Yes, for this is a *Cool Boarders* competition.

Entries, if you will, to *Cool Boarders* Competition, *Official UK PlayStation Magazine*, 30 Monmouth Street, Bath BA1 2BW. And make it snappy, Rosemary, for they must be in by June 31 1997.





This could be you doing a 'goofy' and shouting 'Wicked' as you pull a 360° in your baggy pants and fleece top. But obviously you'd be a lot less pixellated and a little more human.

The question

Now, all you have to do is answer this simple question, which, admittedly, has little to do with snowboarding.

Who was the telephone operator in *Hong Kong Phooey*?

The rules...

No calls, no bribes, no cash alternatives. Oh, and we're quite clever here at *PSM*. We get a little bit peeved when one person sends in 15 billion entries for the same competition. And because we're harsh devils we don't just discard all the extra entries burgeoning our desks, we disqualify the entrant altogether. You have been warned...

PlayStation

CD ROM

1 OR 2 PLAYER

1 OR 2 PLAYER

PURELY ABOUT RACING

PURELY ABOUT RACING

HEAD 2 HEAD

HEAD 2 HEAD

Speedster

Speedster

PSYGNOSIS

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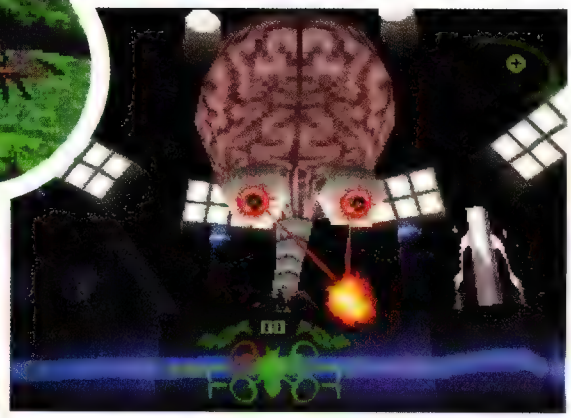
Members of the *Spider* team, enjoying a well-earned break and a cup of the infamous Starbucks coffee.

BOSS GAME STUD

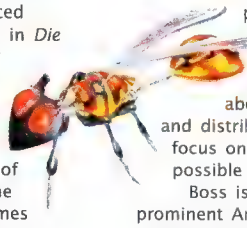
Redland is home to some of the giants of the software industry. Enter a fledgling games house, an offshoot of a film effects company. Who's the Boss?

One of the best aspects of Boss Game Studios' first PlayStation title, *Spider*, is the immense fun you can have controlling the creepy protagonist.



Redland is a 40-minute drive from Seattle on the north-west coast of the States. It's home to some of the giants of the computer industry, notably Microsoft and Nintendo of America. Your *PSM* correspondent, however, is visiting Boss Game Studios, the team that have just put out their first PlayStation game, *Spider*.

Boss Game Studios is an offshoot of Boss Film Studios, the award-winning special-effects house that have produced (notably) special effects in *Die Hard*, *Ghostbusters* and *Species* as well as stuff for the forthcoming *Star Wars* movies. The Game Studios were formed in the summer of 1994 on the back of the film outlet, and the games side was able to use the good name of the effects house to make contacts within the industry.



Boss have just released (through BMG Interactive) their first PlayStation title, *Spider*, a 3D platformer with a host of interesting touches. They are also producing games for the Sega and Nintendo formats.

Colin Gordon is vice president of product development at Boss. He hails from Northern Ireland and has worked, in the past, for Ocean and Virgin. So what brought him over to the States? 'I wanted to make good games – simple as that – and create the games with the best people. It's nice being in Redland, too, rather than San Francisco or LA. Also because we're not publishers, we don't have to worry about capturing licences or bother about marketing, selling and distribution. We simply focus on creating the best possible games.'

Boss is also home to other prominent Anglophiles. **Rob Povey**, the technical director, is originally from Chester but has spent the past few years in the States. Previously he was the lead programmer at Westwood Studios and he also designed *The Lion King* engine for both SNES and Mega Drive. Rob was tempted by Boss because he wanted to get more involved in the management side of the industry: 'I've always thought that the organisation in the industry in general was poor', he explains. 'And Boss gave me the opportunity to work at a higher level as well as to create games with quality people'.

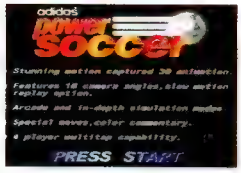
> 'We don't have to worry about licences... we simply focus on creating the best games'

The early signs are that Boss Game Studios will make a success of it, and they certainly seem to have the resources to produce quality PlayStation titles. Much depends on the coming year...

***Spider* is certainly one of the most unusual titles on the PlayStation, with unnervingly realistic movement. Scary.**

Break Point
PSM 13 – 7/10 – Tennis sim
Cool canine capers from the tennis makers. Fine pedigree, chum.

Actua Soccer
PSM 3 – 9/10 – Football sim ★
The most informative loading screen. Well done, the boys at Gremlin.



Adidas Power Soccer
PSM 6 - 8/10 – Football sim ★
Another, 'for what you are about to receive, please be thankful'. Fine.

Assault Rigs
PSM 2 – 7/10 – 3D Combat sim
Hnnrrrgg. Look guys, you're Psygnosis and this is a 32-bit machine. GO.

Battle Stations
PSM 19 – 3/10 – Shoot 'em up
And did you know they spent almost as much time making the game?

Bubble Bobble 2
PSM 20 – 8/10 – Platformer ★
Clearly they've taken the work of Rod, Jane and Freddy to their bosoms.

Robo Pit
PSM 13 – 4/10 – Beat 'em up
A 'techno-esque' type face gleaned from Gary Numan LP covers.

Command and Conquer
PSM 15 – 9/10 – Realtime war sim★
Pwooaar etc… C'mon guy, you've only got 19 seconds left. Dying for it.

Hexen
PSM 19 – 6/10 – 3D adventure
Aha. Stonemasons are on the case with this tombstone effect. Still…

Criticom
PSM 3 – 7/10 – Beat 'em up
… when you've got characters such as these, who needs "oading'. DOH!

Darkstalkers
PSM 12 – 7/10 – 2D beat 'em up
'Yeah, but the font's jazzy isn't it?'. Jagged brutalism, Japanese-style.

Davis Cup Tennis
PSM 11 – 5/10 – Tennis sim
Well, let's be honest, this is the first of the gang to use a full stop. Eh?

Loads & loads...

Destruction Derby
PSM 1 – 7/10 – Racing game
And here we see how the producers develop their loading screens over…

Destruction Derby 2
PSM 13 - 9/10 – Racing game ★
… a period of time, nicely adding to the minimalism of the former.

Die Hard Trilogy
PSM 10 – 8/10 – Arcade adventure ★
Solid block type face, decent use of colour and flame effect. It's loading.

Epidemic
PSM 20 – 8/10 – Corridor blaster
Spartan, yet somehow pleasing. Now if they could get shot of the words…

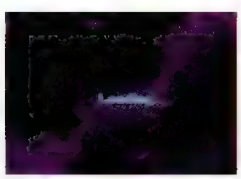
Official PlayStation Magazine
Demo discs – Always StarPlayers
Post constructivism within the formal confines of the cubist movement. Yes.

Formula 1
PSM 11 – 9/10 – Racing game ★
Spinning discivism with flowing, swaying lines of colour. And why not.

NHL Face Off
PSM 6 – 7/10 – Ice hockey sim
Colourful, 1940s comic art-influenced but with a hint of the 1980s.

Firo & Klawd
PSM 14 – 5/10 – 3D isometric blaster
Admire the film noir-esque shadows. Admire his badge with 'loading' on.

Fade To Black
PSM 8 – 8/10 – 3D adventure ★
Influenced by the post-*Goldfinger* paintings of Odd Job. Look out, fella.



X-Com: Enemy Unknown
PSM 1 – 8/10 – Strategy game
'A brutal, stormy skyscape with thunderous clouds.' Sister Wendy.

Star Gladiator
PSM 14 – 8/10 – Beat 'em up
And, in a way, one feels that this WANTS you to know it's loading.

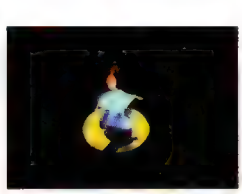
Virtual Golf
PSM 8 – 5/10 – 3D Golf sim
And you're virtually about to play golf, too. Classicist use of type.

Hi-Octane
PSM 3 – 6/10 – Aracde racer
Neo-fascistic work of an ageing NCP car park attendant. 'We're full up'.

Impact Racing
PSM 9 – 5/10 – Driving/shooting sim
Inviting a sensation of chaos through use of blurred, frightening imagery.

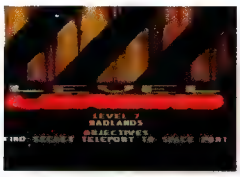
Iron and Blood
PSM 15 – 5/10 – Beat 'em up
Capital letters, a comma AND an ellipsis. Why, aren't they cute?

Krazy Ivan
PSM 3 – 7/10 – 3D shoot 'em up ★
A paean to the days of yore when we counted the clock down for school TV.



Little Big Adventure
PSM 19 – 6/10 – Isometric adventure
Almost an invitation to ride the wave that is *Little Big Adventure*. Ooh, Sir.

Lemmings 3D
PSM 1 – 8/10 – Arcade puzzler ★
And we can take heart from the *Take Hart*-ian use of shape and colour.



Loaded
PSM 2 – 7/10 – Shoot 'em up ★
Claustrophobicism at its finest, with the industrial door slamming tight.

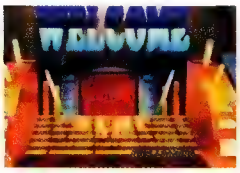
The City of Lost Children
PSM 17 - 3/10 – Arcade adventure
Arthur C Clarke inspired work as we learn of the power of the eclipse.

Olympic Soccer
PSM 8 – 7/10 – Football sim
The use of Snakes & Ladders imagery. It is an up-and-down game.

Mickey's Wild Adventure
PSM 3 – 7/10 – Platform game ★
Minimalist use of rodentism backed by the sturdy surety of good old black.

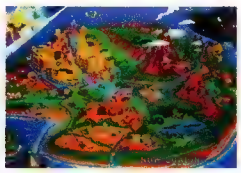
Motor Toon GP 2
PSM 12 – 8/10 – Racing game
Influential breakfast tableism. Note the sauce splashes. Disc as fried egg.

Namco Volume 3
PSM 15 – 6/10 – Retro compilation
Claustrophobic painting entitled 'Centurion In A Bubble'. Hang it.

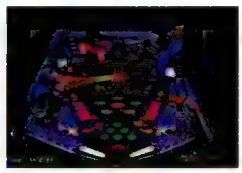


Namco Museum Four
PrePlay *PSM* 20 Retro compilation
Clever use of dark and light in the Welcome sign. But are we welcome?

Nanotech Warrior
PSM 19 – 5/10 – Shoot 'em up
Dangerously Swastika-esque. Anarchists, the lot of 'em.



PacLand (Namco Vol 4)
PrePlay *PSM*20 – Platform game
And in a way, this is saying, 'We've got the whole world, in our hands'.



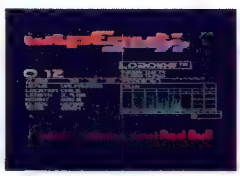
Pro Pinball – The Web
PSM 9 – 7/10 – Arcade football sim
Lack of invention, really, in that this is all you see during the game.

Player Manager
PSM 14 – 2/10 Management sim
Laid back use of Big Ronism. Good use of goal posts, too. Worthy effort.

Sony PlayStation
September 29 1995 Console
Nought really, without the tune that sounds like the start of BBC Sports.

Loading screens – functional gaming entrances, or boring wastelands of TV screen that deserve a good slapping? Surely programmers could come up with something to maintain our interests? Instead we are subjected to all manner of Freudian iconography and pseudo-artistic post-modernism. At least that's the way it seemed to us after staring at 60 of the buggers. It'll do strange things to a man. See what we mean...

Wipeout
PSM 1 – 8/10 – Racing sim ★
E's and whizz, nose bleeds, jumpers for goalposts. Ooh, the good old days.



Wipeout 2097
PSM 12 – 9/10 – Racing sim ★
Beautiful textual finery and graphic-equaliser pretensions. 140bpm.

Primal Rage
PSM 5 – 5/10 Beat 'em up
Lovely Darwinist work entitled 'Dyouthinkesausus?'. I think we did.

Rally Cross
PrePlay *PSM* 20 – Racing sim
A busy work.. A sort of 'My car's bigger than yours' piece. And it is.

Robotron X
PSM 13 – 6/10 – Shoot 'em up
Shifty little disc sits spinning in the corner like a slapped child.

Ridge Racer
PSM 1 – 9/10 – Racing sim
Static version of the actual game. It should be framed.

Ridge Racer Revolution
PSM 6 – 8/10 – Racing sim ★
Somehow reminiscent of the ducks on the wall of Hilda Ogden's gaff.

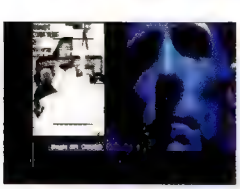
Striker '96
PSM 2 – 6/10 – Arcade football sim
Changes colours as it loads. Amazing what science can do these days.

Street Fighter Alpha 2
PSM 13 – 8/10 – Beat 'em up
That evocative *Mortal Kombat* font that has you smelling blood.

Sentient
PSM 18 – 7/10 – Graphic adventure
Like a doctor's reading room, there's plenty to read, but it's all crap..

Shellshock
PSM 5 – 7/10 – Arcade shoot em up
Urban decay, neon graffiti and tanks portray neo-brutalism. Honest.

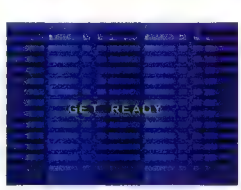
Strikepoint
PSM 16 – 6/10 – 3D shoot 'em up
Spinning discs, big choppers. Freud would have a field day.



Soviet Strike
PSM 13 - 7/10 – Shoot 'em up
Could be the intro. Our copy was so ropey we're not too sure.

Tunnel B1
PSM 10 8/10 – 3D shoot 'em up ★
Looks mean, doesn't it? But is that blood or lipstick?

ThunderHawk 2
PSM 3 – 8/10 – 'Copter battle sim ★
Sepia tones have been sadly lacking throughout. Classy.



Tokyo Highway Battle
PSM 19 – 7/10 – Street racing sim
Later cubism displayed tendencies towards two-tone minimalism.

Trash It
PSM 19 – 6/10 – Platform puzzler
A fat guy with an alarm clock. There's so many of them about these days.

Warhawk
PSM 2 – 8/10 – 3D air combat sim
And last. And by all means least, *Warhawk*. Are you still with us?

PSYGNOSIS

SERIOUS OFF ROADING!

"...QUITE SIMPLY THE BEST 4X4 GAME EVER..." 96% TOTAL PLAYSTATION

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Feedback, *Official UK PlayStation Magazine*, Future Publishing, 30 Monmouth Street, Bath BA1 2BW.

Feedback

This month, subtitles for the hard of hearing, more on that old chestnut, retrogaming, and an apology…

On the wrong tracks

Further to David Webb's letter (Feedback, *PSM*17) I would like to see conversions of late '80s arcade classics appearing on the PlayStation. I happen to be a fan of racing games and my personal favourites include *Chase HQ*, *WBC Le Mans* and *Final Lap*. I'm certain there would be a huge market for such titles. They would satisfy the original arcade audience and look good enough to entice those who missed them the first time around. So come on, Namco, let's have some retro games we can all appreciate.

Scott Camish,
Coventry

A huge market, Scott? It's very unlikely that those bred on a diet of *Ridge Racer* and *Formula One* would even consider spending money (and you'd be talking £30-£40) on a selection of '80s racing classics. These games are terrible. And we're talking about them as people that used to be fanatical about these games in our youth. Retrogames just don't seem up to it in comparison these days. We were even disappointed by *Asteroids* recently in *The Atari Collection* of old classics and we never thought that could happen. But point taken – over to you, Mr Namco. What do you reckon should happen?

Memory man

How about starting a memory bank where readers send in their memory cards with completed games, high scores, etc? You then down-load all the info that's needed and if a reader is stuck on a certain game they can send you their memory card, request the file they need from the memory bank and, hey presto, life becomes easier. A complicated system, I think you'll agree, but worthwhile.

Gary Stewart,
Bonnybridge

Ahem Gary. We'd need two extra members of staff. And, hey, you've paid £45 for a game, why on earth would you want to cheat in the first place? Seriously, we just haven't got the resources for such a bold mission at the moment, but it is a top idea and one that we'll look into in terms of feasibility. Certainly the idea of a tips CD has been mooted and is a distinct possibility – so more on that in the future.

Worst among sequels

Are sequels in danger of becoming too clever for their own good? While I cannot argue against the likes of *Tekken 2*, games such as *Wipeout 2097* and *Destruction Derby 2* have sacrificed the original gameplay for style. The original *Wipeout* was a ground-breaking title that allowed the average player to enjoy the experience. *Wipeout 2097* is without doubt far better presented – but with fewer jumps, much faster cars and tighter tracks, it has become almost unplayable unless you have lightening reactions. This is especially noticeable in the later tracks.

Along the same lines, *Destruction Derby* was undoubtedly flawed in some aspects but it was far easier to gain points by wrecking the other cars. True, the tracks were too narrow for real racing but the point was not to finish first, but inflict as much damage as possible. *Destruction Derby 2* has improved immensely in terms of graphics and game speed, introducing fantastic jumps, rolls, crashes, etc, and there lies the problem – you can't inflict damage if you spend ▶

TALKING LOUD AND CLEAR

First of all I'd like to congratulate you on producing a great magazine. It was a difficult decision to write but I felt your mag would be 'deaf-friendly'.

I am 23 and was born profoundly deaf. I have always enjoyed playing computer games. The first game I played was *Space Invaders* on Atari, then progressing to the Amstrad CPC 464, Amiga AS00, SNES and finally PlayStation. However with the launch of the PS in the UK a lot of games began to use sound and speech. As I am deaf, I cannot access the games fully unless they are also subtitled.

I purchase games carefully and manage to find ones with subtitles – namely *Fade To Black*, *Broken Sword*, *Discworld* and *The City Of Lost Children* – but the choice is so limited. Please can you help me and other deaf users? Would it possible to alert Sony of this problem as I think they are the best software producers and I feel sure they'll do something.

I'd be grateful if you could give any information about the availability of subtitled games software.

Nick Jewkes,
Knaresborough

Obviously, with none of the team being deaf, we can't comprehend what it is like, Nick. And, I'm sure you'd know far better than us which games are affected by an inability to hear speech. Having gone through the catalogue of PlayStation games, however, we don't feel there are as many games as you might imagine that should be ruined for you. Games that have been successful on the PlayStation have been high-action, adrenaline-packed affairs based around racing, fighting and sport. And while some of the sound FX in those are great, there is no speech required.

Taking a look at last month's top-ten-selling games, certainly *MMV3*, *Destruction Derby*, *Ridge Racer*, *Wipeout* and *F1* are all unaffected. Likewise, *Tomb Raider* and *Tekken* etc. In fact, scanning back through issues, there aren't many of the top games that do have speech at their heart. Having said that, we'd be interested to hear from more people about their experiences in this matter, and we'll certainly be passing your comments on to Sony to see what they have to say about the matter.

PlayStation

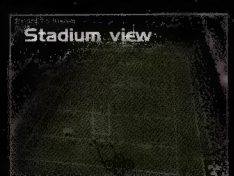
PC CD

SPORTS MASTER

Big Bloke. Big Game.

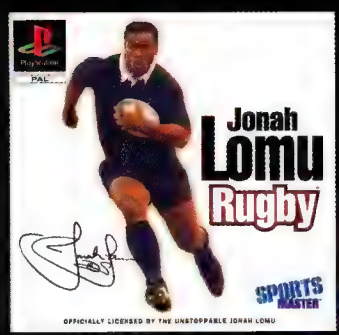
"THE BEST RUGBY GAME I'VE EVER COME ACROSS"
9/10 PlayStation Pro

PlayStation Magazine STARPLAYER



With all the speed of the backs, and the aggressive power of the forwards, comes the definitive multi-player rugby game featuring - tackles, scrums, lineouts, rucks and mauls.

Website: http://www.codemasters.com



Try it once and you're converted

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► half the time airborne! The wider tracks are an improvement but why is it you can't steer off under power? Check out *F1* for realistic car actions. It's quite possible to finish a race without scoring a single point, not for the want of trying. *Tekken 2* is a good example of what a sequel should be, enhancing what was already in place – better visuals, faster gameplay, added sensible options, all improving the original without making it inaccessible.

Paul Coates,
Orpington

Sorry Paul, have to disagree. The original *Wipeout* was incredibly tough for the 'average gamer' – every time you nudge the side of the track you come to a complete standstill. The initial circuits in the sequel are much wider and you can graze the side and still continue. And the problem with the original *Destruction Derby* is that the point wasn't to finish first – and surely the point of any racing game is to take the chequered flag in pole position. Psygnosis were criticised for this and made sure the follow-up was more of a racing game. Gosh, we're at odds here. We reckon that the sequels are far superior, especially as you say in *Tekken 2*. But if anyone has any comments on the above, don't hesitate...

Making connections

I'm new to the PlayStation but I've been a gamesplayer for 15 years now. It doesn't matter too much what a game looks like. The most important feature is two-player/multi-player options. I have an Amiga game called *Sneech* where you race lines in an arena, but what makes it good is that it can be played by six people all together. What do you think about the idea of having modem link options on games as well as the standard serial link? Any external modem (144000 or above) would be suitable and would only require a special cable to connect it to the PlayStation's serial port. I'm sure loads of people would prefer to spend 30-40 quid on a modem than have to carry a TV and a PlayStation to a mate's house. Also Sony could make a fair bit of cash selling the custom serial leads. If you think this is a good idea can you pressure the software houses to put it into action?

Dave Minns (AKA Turbo D)
D.R.Minns@edm.hull.ac.uk

Firstly, Dave, we agree that gameplay should be ahead of graphics every time. But we'd add that if you have the ability to add graphics to an already superb gameplay, then it would be churlish not to. And gradually the PlayStation is producing a series of stunning multi-player racing games, which are far in advance of *Sneech* (good game though it is). With regard to the whole multi-playing question, although we admire your idealism, we're still unsure of the practicality of the suggestion. Our main worry is the slow-down in games that would occur. Even using a link-up cable, the games you play are affected very slightly and don't play quite as quickly as in single-player mode. The PlayStation simply isn't built for large-scale gaming of the sort you are advocating and as such wouldn't be a good bet for modem connections. That's only our opinion, of course, and a third-party softco may have other ideas on the subject. For now, however, the best bet would seem to be to improve the nature of multi-player games played on a single screen.

RETROGRADE STEPS

Having just read your review of the first *Atari Greatest Hits Collection*, I agree with your comments concerning the poor quality of this release. Before purists argue that I'm obviously missing the point of such collections, I would like to say that I'm a big fan of the old arcade games. The problem is that the recent retro releases are largely wasted opportunities.

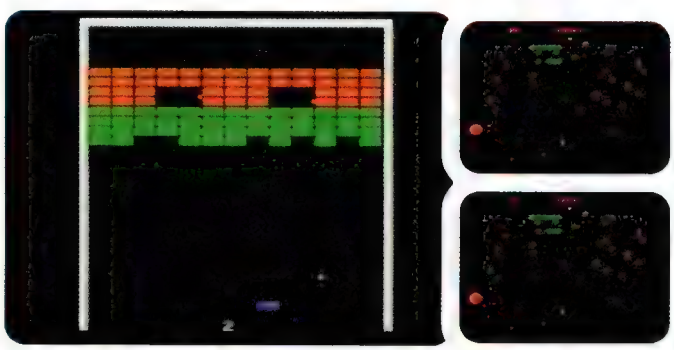
For a start, I think that the price tag for a limited collection of old games is excessive. One mag commented that they had crammed six games on to one CD. Crammed? Am I the only person who remembers the CD-ROM release of 100 Spectrum games on one disc?! Surely Namco could have stuck all five volumes of their collection on a single CD? They should be subjected to the generous *Die Hard Trilogy* as punishment by example. Considering that a simple emulator is used on the games, all the programming effort must be wasted on the impressive but unnecessary game selection sequences.

Secondly the selection of games is rather uninspiring. How could Atari release any collection without including the first two vector-driven *Star Wars* games? Some of the games are just too primitive to be playable. I mean do we have to endure *Super Breakout* when its later incarnation, *Arkanoid*, is a much better game? How about *Nemesis* instead of *Galaxian* and *Tetris* rather than *Phozon*? The fact that we get to play some of these old games for free while some new releases are loading only goes to point out their levels of longevity and overall suitability. I just hope that in the future the software companies pay more attention to what the gamer wants for his/her money.

Martyn Carroll,
Stoke-on-Trent

This retro thing has gone on long enough. Sorry, Martyn, but every month somebody writes in saying how could they release *Cystitis 3* when *Top Deck Back-Packer II* is a far better game. The thing is, we all grew up at different times and were exposed to games on different formats at different stages of our lives. And as a result, a certain set of games will have a relevance to one person and not another.One man's *Pac Man* is another man's *Dig Dug*. So let's knock that one on the head right now.

What we do agree with you whole-heartedly about, though, is that six games on a CD is not exactly packing them in. And with the basic nature of the games, you could stuff a massive catalogue on to them. Come on Atari and Williams, do it!



Head to head

I've purchased lots of racing sims and the one thing that's really bugging me is that there aren't enough two-player, head-to-head games which don't need the link cable. Why do makers of the games not make more head-to-head games such as *Need For Speed* and *Supersonic Racers*? Will there be any two-player games coming out in the future?

Jamie Harmer,
South Shields

And as if by magic, Jamie weighs in with a similar view! The answer is that we hope so. Multi-player gaming is great fun, and this is never indicated more so than on this month's cover-disc demo of *Micro Machines V3*. At the moment there are a number of games that can be played without link-up, but so far it is only really the two-player, head-to-head games that have really hit the mark. Notably in recent weeks, *Super Puzzle Fighter* and *ISS Pro* have been the two games that have seen two members slope off to the games room in a clandestine manner, mumbling something about needing to do some more research as they tip-toe off. To date on the PlayStation, it is the beat 'em ups, sports sims and puzzle games that have really emphasised the importance of two-player gaming, but hopefully in future more of the racing games and adventures will follow suit.

Open to discussion?

I have to say that despite your dismissive comments to Daniel Woolstencroft's letter (*PSM*19) I have to agree about the need for more than one opinion in game reviews – especially as we are now having to pay an average of £45 for a game. For example, I bought *Actua Soccer* because it was dubbed the best footie game on the PlayStation and received high scores, but I thought it was rubbish. Never mind the repetitive in-game commentary and 3D graphics, I just thought it played terribly. If I'd reviewed this game it would have scored nowhere near nine and that, being my opinion, may have dissuaded people from buying it. And can a footie game (*ISS Pro*) that is 'by no means perfect' with 'dreadfully inconsistent' referees and commentary that 'is a farce' featuring 'appaling soundbites' really score a nine? Can the above, along with the fact that you can rarely score from outside the 18-yard area (a crime in itself) and you can only use the Replay function after a goal, really be described as 'quibbles'? You even described the gameplay as 'measured – 8 out of 10'. I just hope that it wasn't the graphical touches like Baggio's ponytail and Ravanelli's white hair that made the score.

Neil Hamshaw,
Wellingborough

Just to reiterate the points we made in reply to Daniel's letter, our reviews are not based on one person's opinion. While we can understand that the idea of multiple views is attractive, here at *PSM* we hate the idea of reading something which is written hastily for the sake of it and is unprofessional in the least. The number of times we've flicked through magazines with these 'varied expert opinions' only to read phrases such as 'well I didn't play it very much so...' or 'well it looks okay, but it's not my cup of tea'. It drives you crazy.

Instead what happens at *PSM* is that a game will come into the office and will be played by all of the team and any freelancers or friends who are passing through. Points are made, comments are noted and gradually an opinion starts to form. Then, however, a couple of people will concentrate on the game more fully, until the need to write a review arises. One person will then write a review, but by that time there's a definitive magazine view on the game and if there are any dissenting voices, then they'll materialise as comments – such as the ones you highlight from *ISS Pro*. If you've played the game, though, I think you'd agree that a nine is appropriate and that our review was accurate. It's a difficult one, because everybody has differing opinions. We just feel that by having a consensus view, we don't confuse people, like you might, with constantly conflicting opinions.

sometimes, a computer game is produced that redefines its genre and becomes the yardstick against which all other games within that genre are measured.

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Letters

Q&A

❶Although I'm not the owner of an IBM-compatible PC, I'm eagerly awaiting the arrival of the black PlayStation, Yaroze. Perhaps this machine could spark the beginning of PlayStation shareware and be the final nail in the coffin of the N64?
❷Come this summer I'll be jetting off to the USA. I own a PAL machine and so obviously I won't be able to purchase any software but I was wondering if the memory cards, controllers, etc, would be compatible?
❸Lastly, even though Sony haven't found the desire to reformat PAL games and banish the boarders, they have, it seems, managed to do it for their latest advertising campaign. How much longer will we have to wait?

Tim Underwood,
Brentwood

❶We don't want to kill off the N64, thank you very much. The more competition there is for Sony, the less likely they are to rest on their laurels and the harder they have to try to keep the gaming public on their side. But, yes, Yaroze will hopefully unearth plenty of new talent ready to join in that battle.
❷No problem. Although the games aren't compatible, the peripherals you mentioned can all be used on a PAL machine. The only difference we're aware of is that Japanese controllers are about 10 per cent smaller than ours, but they can still be plugged into the machine without any problems.
❸Quite a bit we imagine. It is a genuine problem that is a continuing dilemma for programmers to get round due to the difference in television formats. It's a pain, obviously, but not one that ruins your enjoyment of a game, surely?

❶In the Q&A section of *PSM*17 I read with some interest your answer to the question from Francis Noone, of Dublin. You state that *Championship Manager*, from Eidos, is or has been released. This game was originally released on the PC in a rather basic form and greatly enhanced in the CD-ROM version by Domark in *Championship Manager 2*. Will the Eidos version be equivalent to the original or the sequel? And will the different leagues available on the pc version be available on the PlayStation?
❷Also quoted in the same answer was *Premier Manager 2*. When will this be released in the UK?
❸I'm going to Tokyo in June and intend to purchase some games. Any advice you could give on compatibility with UK machines, titles to watch for and possible price differences would be greatly appreciated.

A Webb,
c/0 820 NAS
BFPO 200

❶ In fact, neither. Eidos are apparently going to do a management sim, but it will involve international teams and details are few and far between at present. Sounds like it's going to be very different, though.
❷ *Premier Manager '97* is going to be released by Gremlin, later this summer, in readiness for the coming football season and from what we've seen, it's the best football management sim ever made by any company.
❸ In a word, no. Don't buy any games for your PlayStation in Japan as the two systems are not compatible. Simple as that.

❶I've been an interested reader of *PSM* for four months and haven't come across any cheats or passwords for *Alien Trilogy*. Are there any, and if so, what are they?
❷ Are there any cheats for *FIFA '97*. Are there any hidden teams? And is there, as with *Adidas Power Soccer*, any amusing commentary?

Chris Kerr,
Aberdeen

❶ Unfortunately, Chris, we tend only to tip games that are recently released, or have been continually requested by readers and *Alien Trilogy* doesn't fit either category. If you're after tips on *Alien Trilogy*, your best bet is probably to contact Acclaim on 0171344 5000.
❷Our main tip for *FIFA '97* would be to buy something else instead. *ISS Pro*, for instance.

How about a Datablast at the end of your mag, showing all the games you've reviewed and what mark they got – preferably divided into genres? It's helpful when you want to buy a game as it saves you looking back through back issues.

David Bower,
Wakefield

The sequel to *F1* is due out later this year. It'll be great!

It is indeed. *PlayStation Power* currently run a similar buyer's guide in their magazine and it is something we've been considering for some time. With the increase in pages, it might well be something that is included very shortly.

❶ Will there be a sequel to *Formula One* and, if so, when?
❷ Do you have a release date for *Need For Speed 2*?
❸ Is *Wing Over* any good and when will it be released?
❹ Which is the best air combat game on PlayStation?

Craig Oman,
Tain

❶ Bizarre Creations are working on a sequel, at the moment, which will include many improvements in gameplay and a split-screen two-player option. Expect it to be released late this year in time for Christmas.
❷ Not only a release date, which is May, but a review of the game on page 117.
❸Hard to tell at the moment, as it has constantly been delayed.
❹ Probably the Platinum range title, simply called *Air Combat*, is your best bet and at only £19.99, it's a complete bargain.

❶Is it possible for game companies to include a second copy of the game only to be used in link mode only?
❷What happened to the game *Quest For Fame* that you said was going to be in issue 17?
❸Are we going to have *Flying Corps* and *Indy Car 1* or *2*?
❹Do you know when *NASCAR '96* is going to be released?

SJ Thomas,
Gwent

❶Not at the moment and we suspect that it isn't possible, but it's a cracking idea, in theory, and one that we'll follow up.
❷The title has slipped at the present, but we still believe that the game is going to come out this year.
❸ *Flying Corps* appears to have fallen by the wayside, and *Indy Car 1 & 2* are not forthcoming at the moment either. Don't hold your breath for any of these.
❹ *NASCAR Racing* hit the shops some time ago. Look harder.

❶When is *Final Fantasy VII* coming out?
❷What type of game is *Last Dynasty*?
❸Are there any good 2D beat 'em ups, like *Final Fight* or *Dynasty Wars 2*, coming out on the PlayStation?

Robert Clarke,
Spalding

❶We've been quoted September as a release date for *Final Fantasy VII*. That's certainly when the game hits the States, with us following on quickly.
❷ *Last Dynasty* is a Japanese role-playing game.
❸ *DarkStalkers* and *Street Fighter* are the main examples, but these days 3D is where it's at for fighting, in our opinion. Try to live in the now, Robert.

Talking pages

The 10 most common calls we've received in the office this month.

❶ When is *ISS Pro* coming out?
It'll be in the shops late in June

❷ Which is better *Tekken 2* or *Soul Blade*?
We'd definitely stick with *Tekken 2*, although *Soul Blade* is pretty good

❸ Milford Kopock – is that a made-up name?
No. And indeed our two art assistants really are called Milford Kopock and Alvin Weetman

❹ Is *Porsche Challenge* as good as you said it was?
We were certainly impressed by the little Boxster

❺ Where can I get the first issue of *Coded* mentioned in the last issue?
That'll be the mag out on April 1, yeah? Need we say any more

❻ What's on next month's demo CD?
[illegible] with [illegible] *Adventure* and [illegible] Armstrona

❼ When is the next issue on sale?
It'll be in your shops on Thursday 19 June

❽ When is *Resident Evil 2* due out?
We've heard rumours that *Resident Evil 2* won't actually make it to this country until next year

❾ Has the sequel to *F1* really got a split-screen?
[illegible]
on page 2

❿ Is Simon Bradley there?
No. He works on one of the music mags. This is Steve Bradley's number

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MEAN & MERCENARY

The Beautiful Games

The history of The Beautiful Game on computer is long and rich. Soccer sims have been around for the best part of two decades and they're here to stay. Be it statistical, logical, or all-out arcade fare, there's something for every gamer. Let us look back in anger as we trawl the history of footie...

Computer football ga

The Times

mes - brief history

Footie games have been an integral part of computer entertainment since the days of jumpers for goalposts. From the Sinclair Spectrum to the PlayStation, every platform has been bombarded with soccer titles, both arcade and management, with, it must be said, varying degrees of success. The appeal of football sims is simple enough: it's the national sport, the game that most people identify with and the opportunity to spray a ball around a computer screen, bash together neat passing movements before knocking a 30-yarder into the top corner past a flailing goalkeeper is one of the most satisfying gaming experiences. In short, it lets you play the kind of football you could never reproduce in real life.

It wasn't until 1988 that football games were being developed in earnest. The C64 was still the favoured platform, with *Emlyn Hughes* a popular title

The earliest footie games were rather basic management affairs but some are still regarded with extreme fondness. Kevin Toms began writing management games in 1981 with *Football Manager* the first. It was many people's first introduction to the world of camel coats and tea-cup throwing. Every time the ball headed towards goal, a jumble of sprites would bash a tiny pixel just past the post (usually) while you howled in anguish. Jon Ritman wrote the much-loved *Match Day* and *Match Day 2* for the Spectrum, an arcade game with a two gangs of stickmen roaming the screen. The Commodore 64, many forget, swallowed not only floppy disks, it also had a cartridge system. The cartridge department produced only one really successful title, *International Soccer* hits the Commodore 64.

TIME LINE OF FOOTIE GAMES

The early Eighties was a time of English dominance in European club competitions. In 1981, Ipswich triumph over AZ 67 Alkmaar ('*Que?*') in the UEFA Cup, around the time Kevin Toms was writing his first football management game. Liverpool beat Real Madrid in the European Cup final and Villa won the league. Liverpool's ex-manager Bill Shankly passes away.

1982 is the year that Spain host the World Cup. Bryan Robson scores the fastest goal in the history of the competition after only 27 seconds against France, but England bow out of the competition without losing a game and only conceding one goal after only managing a 0-0 draw with Spain. Bummer. The Italians go on to win the tournament. Elsewhere, Diego Maradona joins Barcelona from Boca Juniors for a record £4.2m. Aston Villa, to the surprise of Europe, beat Bayern Munich in the European Cup final. Bobby Robson becomes the England manager. Oh, and Graham Taylor's Watford beat Sunderland 8-0 to go third in the First Division. Surely Graham's an ideal candidate to succeed Bobby Robson.

In 1983, Alex Ferguson's Aberdeen triumph over Real Madrid to lift the European Cup Winner's Cup. Bob Paisley retires from the Anfield hotseat after nine years in charge. He remains the most successful English club manager in history. Brighton almost beat Manchester United in the FA Cup final but get stuffed 4-0 in the replay. Watford are runners-up in the league to Liverpool and plucky Wimbledon win the Fourth Division. *International Soccer* hits the Commodore 64.

BEN LYTTLETON

Total Football

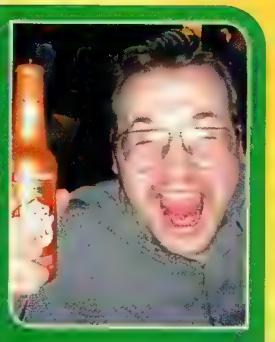
It's easy to see why fantasy football is so popular. But in a world in which Gary Breen getting a flick-on from a corner can make or break your weekend, it's sometimes worth assessing your priorities. Do you want a victory that was down to the efforts of others, or would you rather glory in the majesty of the hard-fought 5-4 pasting you can give your buddy after a night out on the beers? *FIFA International Soccer* on the Sega Mega Drive is my fantasy football.

You see (and no disrespect to Mr. Breen), I can make my central defenders do overhead kicks. My mid-fielders can run past eight opponents and still be no nearer the goal. I can only score from the corner of the penalty area (and only then if I put extra curl on the ball). And, best of all, my goalkeeper can bounce the ball against the head of an opposing striker and always catch it. THIS is fantasy football. Remind me how many assists Breen has got this season?

[1] The version of Electronic Arts' *FIFA Soccer* on the Sega Mega Drive is widely recognised as being the best. [2] Dino Dini's *Kick Off* is a classic.

MARTIN BROWN

Development Director, Team 17



Footie games, hmmm... small boys, wobbling ram-packs.. 5 minutes to load.. isn't it? Hmm..

My personal favourites have to be the original *Football Manager* on the Speccy – as a spotty teenager, I played it to death. I remember taking Lincoln City to the semi's of the FA Cup and hiding behind the couch while the 'action' unfolded via the amazing highlights. Also *Kick Off*, back in '88-'89 when it was the first real footie game to capture the real 'oohs' and 'aahs' – we played it to death and worshipped every last ounce of Dino Dini! (I've since met him!).

(1) The seminal *Sensible World Of Soccer*, on the Amiga, remains for many the greatest football simulation of all time. (2) However *Tracksuit Manager* is but one of the many management games that hit the Amiga.

Soccer (1983). Large of sprite, if somewhat tentative of gameplay, *International Soccer* was sensational for its time.

It wasn't until 1988 that football games were being developed in earnest. The C64 was still the favoured platform, with *Emlyn Hughes International Soccer* from Audiogenic (why on earth anyone would choose Emlyn voluntarily to license their game remains a mystery to this day), *Microprose Soccer* (from the guys that then went on to form Sensible Software) and *Tracksuit Manager*.

This year also saw the growing prominence of the Atari ST and Amiga, the former more prominent at this time. The NES and Sega's Master System also arrived although apart from *Kick Off* (*Super Kick Off* on Sega's console) and *Konami Hyper Soccer* there's little of note. By 1989, the ▶

A wonder goal in the Maracana Stadium - and scored by an Englishman. Yes, 1984, John Barnes dribbles the ball past half the Brazilian team to register for England. France win the European Championship, beating Spain 2-0 at their Parc des Princes home. None of the Home Nations qualified. Liverpool and Everton win the league and FA Cup respectively and Ian Rush is top scorer, with 32 goals. 1984 also saw a tragic loss. The Home Championships, which had been played for a century, bar the war years, is staged for the last time. Northern Ireland win it, but it was England and Scotland who decided it had outlived its usefulness.

1985 wasn't an auspicious year for English football. There's tragedy at Valley Parade when Bradford City's wooden stand burns to the ground. Fifty-six people lose their lives. And in the European Cup final in Belgium, trouble flares at Heysel Stadium when Liverpool fans charge at Juventus supporters and a wall collapses killing 39 people. Everton win the league and the European Cup Winners Cup while Manchester United have to settle for the FA Cup after winning their first 10 league games.

World Cup year. Mexico '86. And THOSE goals. England reach the quarter finals only to be narrowly beaten 2-1 by Argentina. The world's greatest ever player, Diego Maradona scores one with his fist ('Hand of God') ▼

▶ software companies, previously more disposed to the ST, were turning their attentions to the burgeoning Amiga scene and this was where the most innovative football titles emerged from. Dino Dini became a programming legend with his *Kick Off* games and *Player Manager* successfully combined Kick Off with a management sim.

Sensible Soccer arrived in 1992. The graphics weren't the greatest, but in time you grew to love them. But as far as gameplay goes, *Sensi* (as many called it) remains the greatest football sim ever. The ultimate in control over your own actions. The Amiga supports some 70 football titles and other

It's a word that has crept into the English language of late, and it's one which applies to many fans of the football management game. Are you a 'statto'? Management games are massively popular and they still appear on the Amiga

notables are *Goal!*, Dino Dini's *Kick Off 3* in all but name, Graftgold's quirky, cartoon-style *Empire Soccer* and a plethora of decent football management sims.

The early Nineties saw the rise of Sega and Nintendo's 16-bit consoles, the Mega Drive and SNES. EA's *FIFA Soccer* was the title that really caught the imagination, with its impressive isometric perspective and splendid visuals although subsequent versions haven't been up to the standard of the original. *ISS Deluxe* on the SNES remains one of the best football games ever, even though

TIME LINE OF FOOTIE GAMES

then dribbles past half the England team to score a fantastic second. Graeme Souness joins Rangers and begins their restoration to prominence. Everton striker Gary Lineker signs for Terry Venables at Barcelona and Liverpool do the Double in Kenny Dalglish's first season as player manager. George Graham begins his stewardship at Highbury. Stanley Rous, one of England's great football men and ex-president of FIFA passes away. Ron Atkinson gets the boot at Manchester United and is quickly replaced by Aberdeen manager Alex Ferguson.

1987 and the bottom team in the Fourth Division will now be automatically relegated to the conference. Torquay are favourites for the drop and are 2-1 down to Crewe with eight minutes remaining on the last day of the season. Until this. A Torquay defender drops to the ground injured and a police dog, named Ginger, dashes on to the pitch and sinks his teeth into the poor chap's leg. The game is held up for five minutes and when the ref restarts Torquay force an equaliser condemning Lincoln to non-league football for the first time. Oh, Everton win the league, Coventry (yes, Coventry) win the FA Cup and poor old Sunderland drop to the Third Division for the first time in their history.

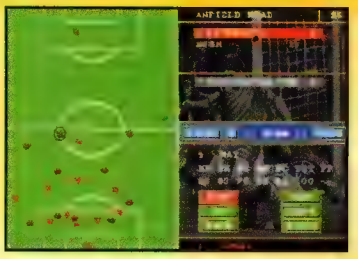
In 1988, Liverpool equal Leeds' 1974 record of starting a season 29 games unbeaten and predictably go on to take the title. Wimbledon snatch the FA Cup from their grasp after John Aldridge (who'd already converted 11 that season) misses a penalty. Whippersnapper Alan Shearer, aged 17, becomes the youngest player

NICK VEITCH

Editor of *Amiga Format*

The first footie game I ever owned was actually Commodore's *International Soccer* on the C64. It was great, but it was hardly a game of skill and tactics, with all the thrill of the real thing. Dino Dini's tremendous *Kick Off* was superb, and I would say the world's first 'real' footie game. But it was bloody hard too.

But I don't think you can top *SWOS* (Amiga version, the PC version isn't as good for some reason). It captures the real thrill of the game. I've never seen people kick their desks apart with such passion (Man.U. equaliser in the 89th), or berate a small group of pixels for not being able to run fast enough. One on one it's like nothing else and yet. It plays pretty well as a management game too. You can keep your polygons and your voiceovers – *SWOS* is the real game.



(1) *International Soccer* was the only successful cartridge game for the Commodore 64, and at a time when most games were on floppy disk. (2) *Sensible World Of Soccer* is both a fantastic arcade sim and an incisive management game. (3) *Ultimate Soccer Manager* encompasses the business world of footie management. (4) *ISS*, a splendid SNES game.

RICHARD JONES

Editor, *Total Football*

The best thing about *Sensible Soccer* on the Amiga was the little ginger fella who ran like the clappers in midfield. It made the game so realistic because there in front of you was Gordon Strachan rushing around the pitch in ever decreasing circles.

I'd never paid much attention to Strachan before I started playing *Sensi*. Now I always look out for Coventry's results. While my *Sensi* opponents perfected that annoying lob from the half-way line that bounced over the keeper's head, or worked on after touch and diving header routines from near-post corners, I just played the ball to Gordon and let him express himself. It was a simple philosophy. It rarely worked, but it was lots of fun.

you don't quite have the freedom of movement that *Sensible Soccer* offers. *ISS Deluxe* recently warranted release on the PlayStation, although it's not to be confused with the wondrous *ISS Pro* (*PSM*19).

The development in optical motion capture techniques enabled the 32-bit 'next-gen' consoles to develop football sims a step further. Professional footballers were hired to produce realistic movement and the first real evidence of this came with Gremlin's ground-breaking *Actua Soccer*. Many still remain unconvinced about the effect that 3D technology has had on gameplay, however. The N64's *J-League* soccer game from Konami is excellent, though, and the PC is starting to see its fair share of decent titles, although most of these reach the PlayStation.

Konami's aforementioned *ISS Pro* is the most recent addition to the 32-bit football fold and it sets a new standard for visual detail, with finely detailed kits and beautifully-observed animation. With sequels to *Actua* and *Adidas Power Soccer* and Ocean's forthcoming UEFA licence, PlayStation owners should be in for another great footballing year.

Management games

It's a word that has crept into the English language of late, and it's one which applies to many fans of the football management game. Are you a 'statto'? Management games are ▶

ever to score a hatrick in the First Division. He's just 17 years and 140 days when Southampton topple Arsenal 4-2. It's also the year of the European Championships in West Germany. For England, the tournament is a shambles and they lose all three matches. Holland win it and Marco van Basten scores one of the finest goals ever – a stupendous volley from a tight angle against the Russians in the final.

After their famous victory in the 1987 FA Cup final, Coventry, just two years down the line, lose 2-1 to non-league Sutton in 1989. Sutton lose 8-0 in the fourth round to Norwich. Also in '89, Nottingham Forest manager Brian Clough whacks a couple of fans when they invade the pitch in a League Cup tie. Clough books a £5000 fine and a touchline ban for the remainder of the season. Rangers' manager Graeme Souness initiates one of the strangest transfers in football history. Former Celtic striker Mo Johnston agrees to join his old club from French club Nantes and is paraded before the Parkhead faithful before the Scottish Cup Final. But in an amazing turnaround, Souness snatches him for Rangers, to which incensed 'Gers fan demonstrate outside Ibrox, burning scarves and tickets. Tragedy at Hillsborough in the FA Cup semi-final when 96 Liverpool fans die in a crush. Liverpool lose the league in the last minute when Michael Thomas pounces for Arsenal.

► phenomenally popular and at one time, it seemed the world and his wife were producing them for the Amiga. It's all about number crunching. Is your striker worth a 17 or a 22? Oh no, your goalie is only a 14, he'll never stop the opposition strikers who're 18 and 23 respectively.

But there have been some notable exceptions to this statistical barrage. *On The Ball: World Cup Edition* by Ascon (Amiga) washed away the stats and made football management a soap opera, an adventure game, where players form is affected by them falling in love and their home life going up the spout. Impressions'

As far as PlayStation footie management games go, forget Anco's *Player Manager* because it's terrible. Wait for *PM '97*

Ultimate Soccer Manager (Amiga, PC) gives you a bewildering amount of menus and options but some of them are fantastic. There's a splendid *Sim City*-type ground building option where you can see new stands, clubs shops and access roads going up before your eyes as you earn more cash. You can even sell hamburgers. Also, *Sensible World of Soccer* (Amiga, PC) not only boasts the most playable arcade football sim, it also contains an impeccably researched management option which you can play in tandem. Port it over. NOW.

As far as PlayStation footie management games go, forget Anco's *Player Manager* (*PSM*14 2/10) because it's terrible. The best option is to wait for Gremlin's forthcoming *Premier Manager '97* which features Barry Davies commentating.

TIME LINE OF FOOTIE GAMES

Italia '90 and Gazza's tears. Prior to the World Cup, Robson announces that he'll be leaving the England hot-seat to take over at Dutch club PSV Eindhoven. England bow out to the Germans in the semi-final, but only after a titanic struggle. Waddle and Pearce miss in the penalty shoot-out, Bobby Robson's World Cup dream is over and the nation mourns. Germany beat Argentina 1-0 in the final. In the FA Cup, Liverpool are beaten in the semi-final by a Crystal Palace team they'd stuffed 9-0 earlier in the season. Manchester United beat Palace in the final and Fergie keeps his job.

In 1991, English football is rocked at the news of Kenny Dalglish's resignation as manager of Liverpool. Kenny cites stress. The announcement comes just days after an epic 4-4 FA Cup tie against neighbours Everton. In the league, Arsenal remain undefeated until their 24th match against Chelsea and go on to clinch the title, with Liverpool still in disarray after the departure of Dalglish. Diego Maradona's drug and sex problems become public knowledge in Italy, where he's still playing. With the prospect of a custodial sentence looming, Maradona returns to Argentina. Manchester United beat Barcelona in European Cup Winners Cup final 2-0 but are beaten 1-0 by Sheffield Wednesday in the League Cup final. Gazza single-handedly takes Spurs to the FA Cup final but shatters his knee at Wembley after some disgraceful challenges. New Liverpool manager Graeme Souness splashes out £5.1 million for Derby's Mark Wright and Dean Saunders.

David Platt becomes the most expensive

STEVE McGILL

Freelance journalist

If there's one defining word which differentiates *Sensible Soccer* from its more glamorous motion-captured, SGI-rendered, next-generation, 3D-animated cousins, then it has to be 'speed'. Truly, *Sensi Soccer* is the football game of speed; speed of play, speed of thought, speed of responsiveness, speed of control. You require a joystick with which you are at one to play the game with any competence. The pace of *Sensible Soccer* is breakneck and unrelenting and it keeps you going until the final whistle. The concentration required of participating protagonists is as intense as it is consuming. Thank the stars that it comes in short, manageable, 150 seconds-a-half bursts. Any longer would probably lead to sub-cranial haematoma with internal haemorrhaging and apoplectic lesions. *Sensi* is the ultimate exalted 100% proof electronic digital brain stimulant. It accelerates key areas of the thought process and keeps the mind sharp and on the ball. When the psychological historians of the future look back to the '90s for evidence of humankind's consciousness evolution, they will point to the as-yet-unmatched contribution made by *Sensible Soccer* and smile enigmatically.

STEVE FARAGHER

Freelance journalist

The greatest football game of all time? *Sensible Soccer*. Amiga version. Why? Because of the 'feel' of the game; that undefinable something that we sometimes refer to here as 'gameplay' – only because there is no other better word to describe it. In *Sensi*, it's the way that you can transfer your skills so perfectly to the game that a two-player game becomes a real contest of skill between the two human opponents, with *Sensi* just acting as the medium. Of course, *Sensi* looks a bit silly now. Its tired old overhead format would never make it on the PlayStation (not because we wouldn't like it, but because the be-suited marketing men don't think we'd like it) and a 3D version just wouldn't be the same game. In terms of sheer fun and playability, it wipes the floor with the likes of *Actua* and *FIFA*.

MARK TAYLOR

Total Football

It's a sad indictment that on Sunday afternoons, when I was 13, they bored me into playing the only computer game to give me the merest semblance of a buzz – *Emlyn Hughes' International Soccer* on the Commodore 64. Here was a game even a computer-illiterate duffer like myself could master in a flash. Just shove the thing on the beginners' level and galumph the ball towards goal by pulling the joystick back and pressing all the buttons. Or use big stirring actions to waltz round statuesque defenders like some fantasy Juninho and Zola hybrid, before effortlessly plonking the ball in the top corner. Easy as pie, 6-1 victories every time and a good deal better than *The Clothes Show*. They hadn't invented super models back then, you see.

footballer in British football history in 1992 when Bari pay Aston Villa £5.5 million. Kevin Keegan returns to Newcastle United as manager. He brings in ex-Liverpool team mate Terry McDermott as his number two. The Geordies are second bottom of the Second Division but in the 16 remaining games, Keegan pulls them out of the mire. In Leeds United's second season back in the top flight, they pip rivals Manchester United to the First Division title, losing only four games all season. Liverpool beat Sunderland to take the FA Cup. Oh, and Graham Taylor's England have a disastrous time in the European Championships in Sweden coming last in their group in Gary Lineker's swansong. Denmark lift the trophy after being called off the beach to replace war-torn Yugoslavia.

1993 is the first year of the Premier League. The £304 million deal between the BBC and Sky gives the latter live football on Sunday afternoons and Monday evenings, while the Beeb get their traditional Saturday night fodder, Match of the Day. One of England's greatest ever players, Bobby Moore passes away in February. And Nottingham Forest's legendary manager Brian Clough retires in May, losing his last game at home to Sheffield United 2-0, a result which consigns them to relegation. Oh, and Man Utd win the league.

World Cup USA '94, the one which Graham Taylor's England fail to qualify for, is an unprecedented success. But not for one Diego Armando Maradona who tests positive for drugs and packs his bags early. Brazil beat Italy in the final on penalties. Manchester United secure their first Double beating Chelsea in the FA Cup final 4-0. Perhaps the best performance comes in the European Cup final where AC Milan take apart a hapless Barcelona 4-0 in devastating display of attacking football. And the mighty Barry Town qualify for the European Cup Winners Cup.

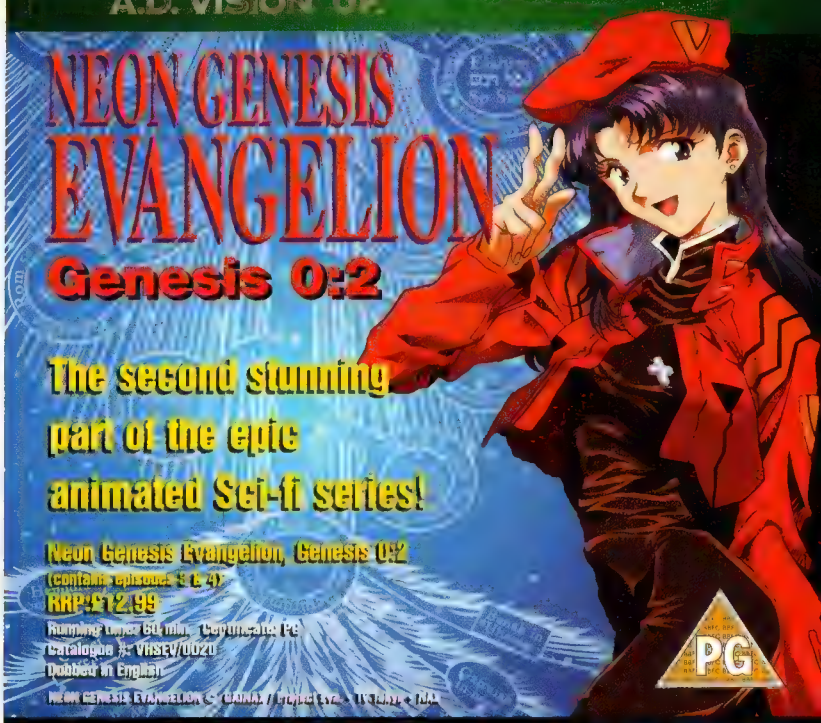
Hmmn. 1995. Eric Cantona begins kung fu lessons. Paul Merson admits to gambling, lager and cocaine addiction. England's friendly at Lansdowne Road, home of the Republic of Ireland ends in shame and is abandoned due to rioting English fans. George Graham gets the boot after an investigation alleges he received £425,000 as a gift from a friendly Norwegian. Chris Armstrong tests positive for cannabis. Dennis Wise gets (quashed on appeal) a three-month sentence for an affray in a taxi. Ray Parlour is fined £800 for an assault on a Hong Kong cabbie. Not an auspicious year. Still, at least Actua Soccer and Adidas Power Soccer hit the PlayStation.

1996. Back to the football. Newly-promoted Middlesbrough shock the Premiership. Would have thought Ravanelli would be following Juninho to Teeside but weeks after scoring in the European Cup final for Juventus? Least of all Fabrizio. Liverpool beat Newcastle 4-3 after Stan Collymore scores an injury time winner. Manchester United complete a 'double Double' after beating Liverpool in a terrible FA Cup final. Oh. England hosts Euro '96 and the country is awash with footie fever. The Germans win it.

1997. What? Liverpool beat Newcastle 4-3? At Anfield? With an injury time winner? England succumb to the Italians in the World Cup qualifier at Wembley. But all is not lost, as Konami release the splendid *ISS Pro* on the PlayStation. Hurrah.

A.D. VISION UK

... announces two tantalising Japanese anime titles out on the 9th June 1997



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You get nowt for coming

Well, at least you get a video with this. And some tough old questions, too. But lads...

Trivial Pursuit footie video

There can be no contention here. *Sensi World of Soccer* takes the game by the scruff. Winner.

Sensible World Of Soccer

Indeed, Terry Venables is the manager. But only of Australia as it happens. Sorry Tel...

Terry Venables The Manager

Despite the urge of the goalies to avoid any strike on goal, we have to say *Actua* wins.

Actua Soccer

The home of football indeed deserves a place in the Hall of Fame. A fine board game.

Wembley

Dino Dini's game was a classic of its time but in the cut and thrust, it really doesn't do it.

Kick Off

Subbuteo? Cards? Sounds like a recipe for success, but can it take on the veteran?

Subbuteo Soccer

The Commodore 64 stalwart still stands tall, still takes the game in midfield. Yes, he's there...

International Soccer

Sensible World Of Soccer

Well, they came, they saw and they ran them up the high street. It's got to be *Sensi*.

Actua Soccer

A good run from the Sheffield stalwarts but a good run ends sensibly to the greatest.

Wembley

Roll the dice, lay the cards on the table. You got it.

The Commodore 64 veteran can go no further. Shame.

International Soccer

Sensible World Of Soccer

Every team from every league from every country and the players are real and all are valued at current worth. Well, it had to be...

The boys from the Twin Towers couldn't quite make the long road home as they flounder to the great *Sensi*. But still, one of the great games.

Wembley

Sensible World Of Soccer

Nerves early doors in the final. Both games have been played on 32-bit machines, both have the pedigree. *SWOS* takes up the running, knowing that its wealth of teams and management option stands it in good stead. But can it hit the opposition where it hurts?

ISS Pro

It went to extra time and penalties. Nail-biting stuff to the last and a controversial decision by the ref, to boot. But in the end the newcomer is the champion, with its flashy graphics, its huge stadia, it larger-than-life attitude. We have to make *ISS Pro* the winner.

second

In the interests of science, we felt duty-bound to discover whether computer games are better than their non-pixellated friends. We gathered a plethora of contenders and set up a knock-out tournament. But who would win it... ?

Ah, but can a board game which features non-footie questions take on the mighty?

Of course not. *ISS Pro* stands proud, holds its head high and buries it in the bottom corner.

***World Cup Top Trumps* jogs down the tunnel confident of victory against *Premier* lads.**

Despite a hard fought game, the stats-based might of *PM3* couldn't over come the *Tops*.

***Cambridge Utd* board game? Can't be many around. It can't beat the great *USM* can it?**

Build a new stand, sell more burgers and erect a new club shop. You can't go wrong.

Almost the Brazil of 1970, the *Subbuteo* fellows. Poor old *FIFA* doesn't stand a chance.

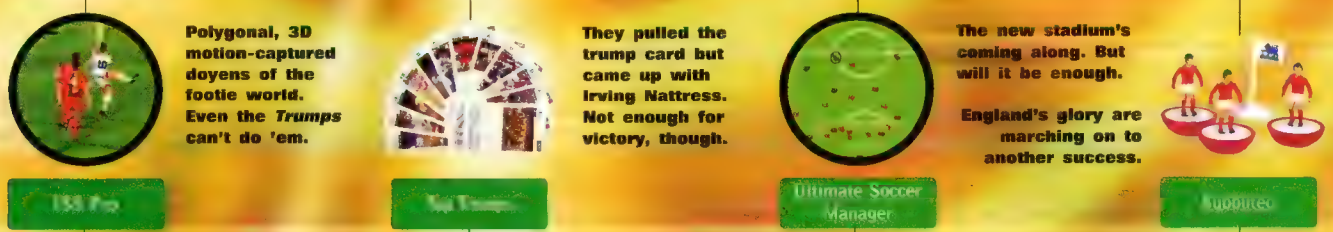
Sorry, mate. For all your 3D finery, we can't paint your arms with a biro. Out you go...

Polygonal, 3D motion-captured doyens of the footie world. Even the *Trumps* can't do 'em.

They pulled the trump card but came up with Irving Nattress. Not enough for victory, though.

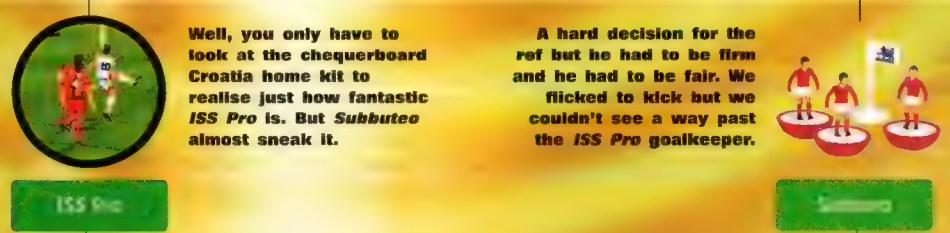
The new stadium's coming along. But will it be enough.

England's glory are marching on to another success.

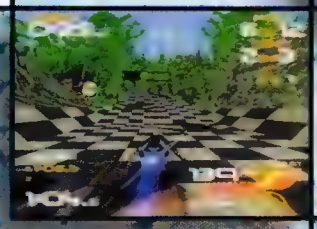


Well, you only have to look at the chequerboard Croatia home kit to realise just how fantastic *ISS Pro* is. But *Subbuteo* almost sneak it.

A hard decision for the ref but he had to be firm and he had to be fair. We flicked to kick but we couldn't see a way past the *ISS Pro* goalkeeper.



***ISS Pro* comes up against the seasoned campaigner, and a performer who's been to all the major finals. But the cheeky newcomer has youth on its side and beautiful, motion-captured 3D animation. It's got the flashy stripes and the overhead kicks, it's the multi-millionaire.**



ONE FOR THE ROAD

Take a PlayStation, five 'adults' and a number of demo discs. Boot up racing games and add alcohol. Stand back for three or four hours and watch for results. You may be surprised...

Race Points 00
23
ASTRO

It's a well-known fact that while alcohol renders you incapable of most activities – such as speech, movement and retaining bodily fluids – it does, however, improve your pool playing. Sober, the balls just refuse to go in, while after a couple of pints you're suddenly doubling in the black off a snooker and could probably wipe the floor with Stephen Hendry.

People are now starting to rapidly build up a new subsection of urban myths, however, claiming that the same sort of effect operates with videogames. They get in pissed, boot up the PlayStation and wake up in the morning with the joypad covered in ectoplasm, mouth tasting like a rugby player's jockstrap and a phenomenally excellent score in some game flashing on the screen. They then spend the rest of the morning failing miserably to replicate the score before discovering that the ectoplasm is in fact kebab grease and it's melting the joypad's innards.

They say that alcohol decouples the forebrain, so while you're worrying about exactly what that purple-coloured thing in your Chinese takeaway is, your subconscious is busy guiding your thumb around the D-pad and your car between the barriers.

Is this true, though? Can the nigh-on mythical Pool Effect be replicated in the gaming world? Or, after a couple of pints, are you incapable of negotiating your vehicle round a circuit without careening off every barrier in sight? Well, never ones to shirk a scientific investigation, we trotted off to Threshers, gathered some friends round and started collating empirical data. Any excuse, eh?

It was decided to use driving games for the testing for a couple of reasons. Firstly the lap times are an easy way of recording relative performance and secondly there's already an established limit beyond which driving a car is illegal. And rightly so, if you can't control your legs after a couple of pints, there's no way you should be allowed anywhere near the wheel of a motor. You rarely kill somebody by bumping into them walking past a chip shop, but you could easily if you're in your car.

Sadly in our experiment, though, the local constabulary declined to lend us a breathalyser so we had to take a rough guess and pegged the 'over the limit' figure at two units (a pint, or a double, or two glasses of wine).

All the games were taken from demo discs that have appeared on this magazine, apart from *Destruction Derby*, the demo version of which was in Wreckin' mode and had no lap times. For this we used the full-game version but anyone who's got a half-decent stopwatch could get roughly the same data from the demo.

Experience as a gamesplayer across our guinea pigs varied, so everyone was allowed one practice run on each game before having to record a time while sober. Their next time was recorded after imbibing two units (at which point they'd have been nicked driving a real car) and their last after they started turning down offers of more drink. This, we reckoned, was a good indication of being plastered, as the booze was free and none of the participants have a record of turning down free drinks without good reason.

Then, taking the sober times as being 0, we calculated how all the booze had affected their performance by totalling up the change in times across the various games and then taking an average. We were going to include a handicap rating, as well, but when we found ourselves drawing bell curves to illustrate the results, and taking tangential references of coordinates to record points of inflection in our performance learning curves, we reckoned that maybe we were getting way too sad and left it as it is. And so we started drinking...

Liquid engineering

All of our guinea pigs were put on a drink of their choice for the experiment. Listed below are the preferred social lubricants of our PlayStation drivers...

Beverage: Red wine
Alcoholic content: 12%
Price: £4.99 for the bottle
Playing factor: A mellow drink that relaxes you for an evening's playing, but perhaps blurs the edges a little too much to be anything of a really competitive driver.

Beverage: Dry white wine
Alcoholic content: 10%
Price: £3.99 for the bottle
Playing factor: A cheeky little number that is fruity and refreshing. Should be the perfect accompaniment for *Porsche Challenge*.

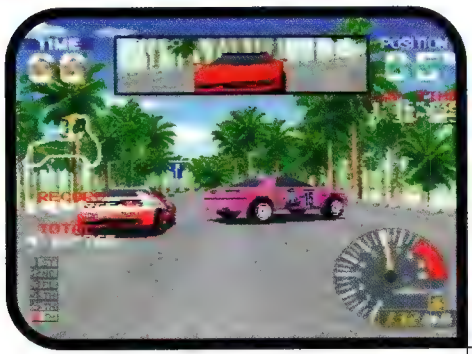
Beverage: Vodka & Orange
Alcoholic content: 37.5%
Price: £12.49 for the bottle
Playing factor: Surely not a good bet for any games player? Hard spirits are not the ideal fuel for the *Wipeout 2097* player. Watch as you slap against those walls.

Beverage: Stella Artois
Alcoholic content: 5%
Price: £1.15 per can
Playing factor: Strong lager is probably not the preferred beverage of Damon Hill or Jacques Villeneuve, but it does the job if you want to zip around *Destruction Derby*.

Beverage: Strongbow Ice
Alcoholic content: 8%
Price: 99p per can
Playing factor: Cider-drinking may take your worries away, according to the Worzels, but can it make you a better player at *Supersonic Racers*? We suspect not.

Lapping it up

The games played throughout the night of debauchery were games that should all be readily available to long-term readers of the *Official UK PlayStation Magazine*. All six have appeared on the demo disc at some point, but all six are also best-selling titles that one of your mates should own



RIDGE RACER REVOLUTION

Demo disc: 9
Timed on: Single lap, standing start
Performance: 5/10

Not the best to try. The collision detection's a bit suspect at the best of times and trying to cope with that and the fine line between hanging the rear-end out and doing a 360° while alcohol pickles your synapses makes it all a bit nasty.

SUPERSONIC RACERS

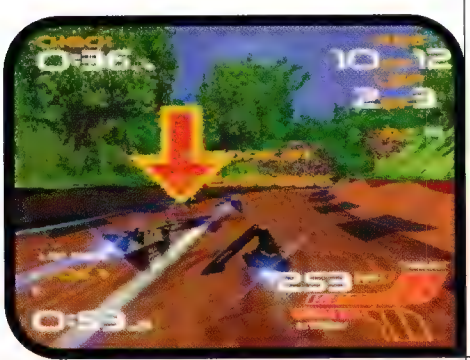
Demo disc: 10
Timed on: Croc Hop course, single lap, standing start
Performance: 7/10

Becomes far more entertaining when drunk. Difficulties of actually stopping on the raft to cross the lake make for vastly amusing experience for anyone watching.

PORSCHE CHALLENGE

Demo disc: 15
Timed on: Nothing. The CD was sat on early in the evening and didn't work particularly well after that.
Performance: 0/10

Surely they can make these things out of something a bit more solid? We only sat on it lightly!



WIPEOUT 2097

Demo disc: 13
Timed on: Fiesar Team, Gare D'Europa, single lap, standing start
Performance: 6/10

If you're not already good at this, forget it. Difficult enough to control for a novice when sober, becomes a nightmare after you get three sheets to the wind. Danger of throwing up if you focus on the screen too closely too. And just like you on the way to the bathroom, watch as your craft slaps regularly against those walls.

FORMULA 1

Demo disc: 13
Timed on: Arcade mode, easy, Nurburgring circuit, Mika Hakkinen in McLaren, single lap, standing start.
Performance: 8/10

Very forgiving of the uncoordinated and, in this mode anyway, actually becomes slightly easier to play as long as you remember the black stuff is more grippy. Completely impossible on full simulation, mind, but then you wouldn't get Damon Hill racing round Silverstone on a skinful.

DESTRUCTION DERBY

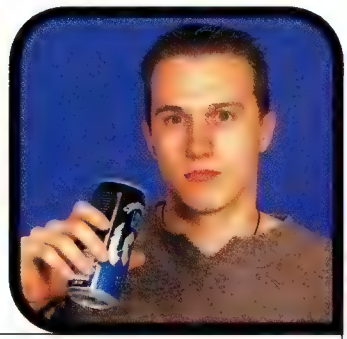
Demo disc: Full game
Timed on: Pike Hills Raceway, novice car, stock car mode, best time in four laps
Performance: 9/10

Best of the lot. In fact it's probably better to play *Destruction Derby* when drunk than it is when sober. It becomes difficult to play due to the reaction times involved and obvious homicidal intent from AI cars. But even if the lap times become complete rubbish, the carnage is great to watch after a few bevvies.

Positive readings

	AMANDA MORGANS	PETER SMITH	TIM MORGANS
Fit for the road?	**PlayStation experience:** 0/5 **Driving game experience:** 0/5 **Drink:** Red wine **Notes:** Never touched a driving game in her life and suffers from left/right dyslexia. Never accept a lift from this woman. **Quote of the night:** 'I don't know whether I'm going forwards or bloody backwards.'	**PlayStation experience:** 5/5 **Driving game experience:** 3/5 **Drink:** Stella Artois **Notes:** Drinks very quickly then falls asleep. **Quote of the night:** 'Wow, look at those fluffy white clouds.'	**PlayStation experience:** 3/5 **Driving Game Experience:** 3/5 **Drink:** Vodka & Orange **Notes:** More used to playing PC games. **Quote of the night:** 'One day, when I've got time and I'm not busy, I'm going to take all your skin off.'
Sober as a judge	***Wipeout*:** Failed to make first checkpoint ***Ridge Racer Revolution*:** Failed to finish lap ***SuperSonic Racers*:** 2:10.2 ***Formula One*:** 1:58.7 ***Destruction Derby*:** 1:04.38	***Wipeout*:** 1:21.3 ***Ridge Racer Revolution*:** 1:16.3 ***SuperSonic Racers*:** 51.7 ***Formula One*:** 1:43.7 ***Destruction Derby*:** 28.43	***Wipeout*:** 1:27.6 ***Ridge Racer Revolution*:** 1:31.0 ***SuperSonic Racers*:** 59.3 ***Formula One*:** 1:44.1 ***Destruction Derby*:** 30.31
Bit of a tipple	**2 GLASSES** ***Wipeout*:** Failed to make first checkpoint ***Ridge Racer Revolution*:** Failed to finish lap ***SuperSonic Racers*:** 1:58.3 ***Formula One*:** 1:44.8 ***Destruction Derby*:** 1:01.65 **AVERAGE TIME: -9.52**	**2 CANS** ***Wipeout*:** 1:24.9 ***Ridge Racer Revolution*:** 1:16.5 ***SuperSonic Racers*:** 55.8 ***Formula One*:** 1:46.8 ***Destruction Derby*:** 24.89 **AVERAGE TIME: +1.49**	**A HEALTHY DOUBLE** ***Wipeout*:** 1:30.4 ***Ridge Racer Revolution*:** 1:28.6 ***SuperSonic Racers*:** 1:04.8 ***Formula One*:** 1:44.2 ***Destruction Derby*:** 28.65 **AVERAGE TIME: +0.87**
Pissed as a fart	**ENTIRE BOTTLE DRUNK** ***Wipeout*:** Failed to make first checkpoint ***Ridge Racer Revolution*:** Failed to finish lap ***SuperSonic Racers*:** Abandoned due to mass hilarity ***Formula One*:** 2:08.3 ***Destruction Derby*:** 57.69 **AVERAGE TIME: +1.46** **Conclusions:** *DD* times never helped by not being able to avoid pits. Left/right dyslexia seemingly expanded to forward/backwards dyslexia as well with alcohol.	**FOUR CANS** ***Wipeout*:** 1:27.2 ***Ridge Racer Revolution*:** 1:32.8 ***SuperSonic Racers*:** 52.8 ***Formula One*:** 1:35.9 ***Destruction Derby*:** 24.27 **AVERAGE TIME: +2.31** **Conclusions:** Capable of blinding speed while awake.	**HALF BOTTLE OF VODKA** ***Wipeout*:** 1:27.8 ***Ridge Racer Revolution*:** Failed to finish lap ***SuperSonic Racers*:** 1:16.4 ***Formula One*:** 1:40.7 ***Destruction Derby*:** 29.83 **AVERAGE TIME: +3.36** **Conclusions:** You can know someone for years and never realise they stick their tongue out when concentrating.

All of the players had varying gaming experience and different reactions to alcohol. Listed in the table are details of how they progressed, in terms of lap times, compared to the amount of alcohol they lapped up. While some improved initially, they generally seemed to fade as the drinks kicked in...



SARAH WALSH	PHIL BRACKSTONE
PlayStation experience: 4/5 **Driving game experience:** 1/5 **Drink:** Dry white wine **Notes:** Infamous for her *Tekken 2* skills, a complete novice in the driving field. **Quote of the night:** 'Have I done *Wipeout* yet?'	**PlayStation experience:** 5/5 **Driving game experience:** 4/5 **Drink:** Strongbow Ice **Notes:** Drinks like a big girl's blouse. **Quote of the night:** 'I don't care what state I'm in – I can beat anybody.'
***Wipeout*:** Failed to make first checkpoint ***Ridge Racer Revolution*:** Failed to complete lap ***SuperSonic Racers*:** 1:31.2 ***Formula One*:** 2:00.5 ***Destruction Derby*:** 1:01.13	***Wipeout*:** 1:22.5 ***Ridge Racer Revolution*:** 1:18.4 ***SuperSonic Racers*:** 53.4 ***Formula One*:** 1:39.3 ***Destruction Derby*:** 25.11
2 GLASSES ***Wipeout*:** Failed to make second checkpoint ***Ridge Racer Revolution*:** Failed to complete lap ***SuperSonic Racers*:** 1:15.6 ***Formula One*:** 2:07.8 ***Destruction Derby*:** 52.19 **AVERAGE TIME: -5.75**	**2 CANS** ***Wipeout*:** 1:24.9 ***Ridge Racer Revolution*:** 1:16.5 ***SuperSonic Racers*:** 55.8 ***Formula One*:** 1:46.8 ***Destruction Derby*:** 24.89 **AVERAGE TIME: +2.04**
FOUR GLASSES ***Wipeout*:** Failed to make first checkpoint ***Ridge Racer Revolution*:** Failed to complete lap ***SuperSonic Racers*:** 2:10.9 ***Formula One*:** 1:56.8 ***Destruction Derby*:** 40.87 **AVERAGE TIME: +5.25** **Conclusions:** *Wipeout* proved a problem. Biggest difficulty, though, in crossing lake on *SuperSonic Racers* level. Still vastly prefers *Tekken 2*.	**THREE CANS ONLY** ***Wipeout*:** 1:26.5 ***Ridge Racer Revolution*:** 1:16.3 ***SuperSonic Racers*:** 51.7 ***Formula One*:** 1:43.7 ***Destruction Derby*:** 28.43 **Average Time:** +1.58 **Conclusions:** Mouth wrote cheques that fingers couldn't cash. Improved over a couple of times but became slow in reacting to other traffic.

The results

So, having taken a group of people and poured alcohol down their throats all evening at Future's expense, what conclusions can be drawn apart from the fact that red wine gives you a vicious hangover? If you look at the individual times, not too much, but the averages show something else. At 2 units, most people improved as a whole, probably due to a greater familiarisation with the game which hadn't yet been dulled by alcohol. At the inebriated stage, though, everyone did slightly worse as reaction times fell off rapidly. That said, the times weren't as bad as predicted.

Admittedly, by the time it got to one in the morning you would have wanted to run very fast the other way if any of those involved had decided to start operating heavy machinery, but manipulating a joypad didn't seem to be too much of a problem. Balance and remembering where the loo was, yes; direction buttons, no.

Negotiating sweeping curves where you could see the corners coming a mile off didn't create too many difficulties and a game along the lines of *Need For Speed* wouldn't have presented too many problems. But anything requiring either quick reactions or fine co-ordination became a far greater challenge. On the one hand this led to drastic over-compensation if an AI car nudged you on *Destruction Derby* and an accompanying visit to the Armco, and on the other many complete failures to negotiate the Croc Lake on *Supersonic Racers* – probably not helped by the fact that it was the only game to use a different button for acceleration.

So what makes a good post-pub game?

Post-pub polygonal gratification tends to demand different things from a game than one played under normal circumstances. It's the same sort of thing with films; *Citizen Kane* might be a superb piece of celluloid but you wouldn't really want to watch it when you're lagered up, partly because you end up shouting 'Rosebud' at the screen all the way through. Attention spans go down, desire for carnage goes up and whipping through a couple of levels of *Tomb Raider* isn't going to provide the instant adrenaline fix needed to penetrate your fuddled senses.

What you need is something suitably mindless with a high-action content that's as fun to play as it is for anyone else to watch. It should also be quick, taking each player a couple of minutes to complete, as if you bring a load of mates home they're going to demand access to the Girlie Show if you then spend 40 minutes showing them your winning strategies in *Command & Conquer*.

A Replay mode is essential. That way, if anybody proves to be spectacularly incompetent, their mistakes can be relived and reviled in slow-mo detail. Also you need something you can compare performance with. No matter what anybody says, this is an ego thing and it's important to have the biggest.

FREE

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Exclusive interviews with Alan Shearer and Les Ferdinand • How the title was won • The greatest Brazilians EVER • Ferenc Puskas • Ref bribe scandal • Trevor Brooking • Jorg Albertz and much more

TOTAL FOOTBALL

NEW ISSUE ON SALE NOW!

Psst...Wanna buy a game?

It's a jungle out there. Well, all right... not exactly a jungle, but there are plenty of opportunities for you to get caught out when buying a new (or second-hand) PlayStation or games. With the help of the Office of Fair Trading, *PSM* have compiled an exhaustive guide to help you get satisfaction when something goes wrong. Read on and be enlightened...

YOUR RIGHTS UNDER THE LAW

THIS IS THE STUFF that covers everything you buy, whether it's a PlayStation game or a stuffed aardvark. It's well worth knowing exactly what the law says. These are your *'statutory rights'*. All goods bought or hired from a trader – whether from shops, street markets, mail order catalogues or door-to-door sellers – are covered by these rights.

The law says that goods must be:

'of satisfactory quality'

They must meet the standard that a reasonable person would regard as acceptable, bearing in mind the way that they were described, what they cost and any other relevant circumstances. This rule covers, for instance, the appearance and finish of the goods, their safety, and their durability. Goods must be free from defects, even minor ones, except when they have been brought to your attention by the seller – for example, if the goods are said to be shop-soiled.

'fit for their purposes, including any purpose mentioned to you by the seller'

For example, if you're buying a videogame and you explain that you want one which can be played on a specific type of machine, the seller mustn't give you one that can't.

'as described'

On the package or a display sign, or by the seller. If you are told that a shirt is 100% cotton, then it shouldn't turn out to be cotton and polyester.

THE ESSENTIA

IF THINGS GO WRONG

IF THERE IS SOMETHING wrong with what you buy, tell the seller as soon as possible. If you can't return to the shop within a few days of making the purchase, it's a good idea to telephone to inform them about your complaint. Make a note of the conversation and to whom you spoke.

If you tell the seller promptly that the goods are faulty and you don't want them, you should be able to get your money back.

When you reject faulty goods you may be offered a replacement, free repair or credit note, but you can insist on having your money back in full. If you accept a credit note, usually you won't be able to exchange it for cash later on, so you're better off getting your money back straight away.

Don't be put off by traders trying to talk their way out of their responsibilities. By law the seller must deal with complaints about defective goods. Remember, you have the same rights when you buy sale goods as at any other time: the seller cannot get away with notices saying there are no refunds on sale goods.

And don't be afraid to complain, even if you have no receipt – you still have the same rights. But a receipt is useful evidence of where and when you bought the goods.

If you received faulty goods as a present, you may have to ask the person who bought them to complain for you, or to authorise you in writing to complain on their behalf. Only the buyer has the statutory rights described above.

MAKING A COMPLAINT

GO BACK TO THE shop as soon as possible. If you have the receipt or other proof of purchase, take this with you. Explain the problem, what you want done, and set a deadline. If you are not satisfied, don't hesitate to put your complaint in writing. If the shop is part of a chain, write to the head office. Address your letter to the Customer Services Manager or the Chairman.

If none of this works, get further advice (see the 'HELP' list of useful contacts below), or consider whether you want to take the matter further by going to court.

HELP

IF THINGS ARE NOT getting sorted out to your satisfaction, there are several places that will try to help you:

OFFICE OF FAIR TRADING CONSUMER INFORMATION LINE
0345 224499
Calls are charged at local rates. They will give you guidance on where practical help may be obtained if problems arise in the purchase of goods or services.

TRADING STANDARDS (or Consumer Protection) **DEPARTMENTS OF LOCAL AUTHORITIES**
They have wide-ranging powers to help the consumer. The address is in the phone book.

CITIZENS ADVICE BUREAUX
Again, see phone book.

ELSPA – 01386 830642

MAIL ORDER

YOU HAVE THE SAME statutory rights when you buy via mail order as when you buy from a shop, but there are other things you need to consider. When giving your credit card details over the telephone, be particularly careful that you are dealing with a reliable trader.

Goods should be delivered within 28 days, or as specified in the ad. If the goods don't turn up, you can cancel the order and ask for your money back. But if you agree to allow the seller extra time, you cannot cancel until that time is up. Examine the goods as soon as you can and if they are faulty, send them back immediately with a note explaining the problem. Keep a copy of your note. It's also advisable to get a Proof of Postage certificate from the Post Office. The company should reimburse you for the cost of returning goods.

If you do order through an advertisement, read it thoroughly before placing an order and keep a copy. If you cannot keep a copy, note the advertiser's name and address, where and when the ad appeared, when you posted your order and any other details, such as charges for p&p. Avoid sending cash in the post – use cheques or postal orders. If you must send cash, send it by Registered Post.

If you receive goods that you haven't ordered, you don't have to accept them. Write to the company explaining that you do not want the goods. If they are not collected within 30 days, they become yours. Or put them to one side, unused. After six months they will become yours.

L LEGAL BIT

GOODS ON ORDER FROM A SHOP

IF YOU ORDER SOMETHING not in stock, you may agree a date by which you must have it. It is a good idea to get this in writing. If the goods don't arrive on time, you can refuse to accept them. Even if you do not agree a delivery date the seller must still deliver in reasonable time. If you think enough time has passed and do not want to wait any longer, tell the seller. Say that if the item has not come by a certain date, you want your money back.

PART EXCHAN

PIRACY

THIS IS ONE OF the most dangerous areas for any consumer. Buying pirated software voids all of your consumer rights, and, if you know that the software is illegal when you buy it, you're committing a criminal offence too. In the PlayStation's case, you should never buy any game that's on a gold disc. Gold discs are a special kind of CD that can be recorded on to and are never used for commercial software releases. If you come across somebody selling these kind of discs, give ELSPA a ring. ELSPA is an organisation that represents nearly all the European software developers and distributors and they have an active unit that attempts to prosecute pirates.

TRADING IN

ALTHOUGH SO FAR ONLY one major chain, Electronics Boutique, has got involved in part-exchanging games, nearly all of the independent shops offer some sort of scheme whereby they'll give you money off a new game in exchange for an old one. The amazing thing is the variety of prices that are offered by different companies. So who offers the best deal? We took a basketful of games along to Electronics Boutique, an independent retailer (Games Exchange, in Bath), and to a company that had advertised in the magazine (Gamester's) which we chose at random.

The five games we chose were *Magic Carpet* (an oldie, but goodie), *Tekken* (now released on budget), *Alien Trilogy* (another oldie, but goodie), *Destruction Derby 2* (brand new and great) and *Galaxy Fighter* (brand new and crap). The results we got were very interesting:

	GAMES EXCHANGE	EB	GAMESTER'S
Magic Carpet	£15	£10	£10
Tekken	£8	£5	£7
Alien Trilogy	£11	£10	£16
Destruction Derby 2	£21	£15	£22
Galaxy Fighter	£18	£12	**

**Gamester's hadn't heard of *Galaxy Fighter* and so couldn't give us a price.

The most striking thing about these results is that prices quoted by Electronics Boutique were consistently lower than anyone else's. The only justification they were prepared to offer in the shop on any of these prices was that they would have offered more for *Destruction Derby 2*, but they already had a good number in stock. It's a point worth making that any retailer will offer you less money for a game if they've got a lot of them in stock, but it doesn't really explain why EB's part-exchange prices were so much lower than those of other retailers.

Games Exchange is a small chain of independents, with eight shops in the South West. They use something called the *Game Guide* to decide on their prices, as do 550 other shops around the country. *Game Guide* is an independent guide to software prices for the retail industry – both new and secondhand – which is published monthly. *Games Guide* takes a look at what prices a wide range of shops are selling games at, then adjusts its prices accordingly. As far as we can tell, if a shop's basing its decisions on the *Game Guide*, you're going to get a reasonable deal.

The one thing that Electronics Boutique

Many thanks to Games Exchange, in Bath; Brian Stannard, Shaun Fergusson and Vincent Newman

does have going for them is that while their offer prices were consistently lower, they do have the games in stock that we wanted to exchange for. The independent stores don't have as much clout in the software business as the big chains, so when there's a shortage of stock, it's the big chains that get it first.

So the advice for selling second-hand games is to shop around. Give a few places a ring and find out where you can get the best deal. And also make sure that they stock the title you'd like to exchange your game for before going to purchase it or sending off for it in the post.

SECOND-HAND GAMES

IT'S WORTH POINTING OUT straight away that when you buy a second-hand game, your rights are exactly the same as they are when you're buying a new game. There's no difference at all. So, having said that, second-hand games are an obvious bargain when you can find them. The only piece of advice worth repeating here is to make sure that a game is actually in stock before sending off for it mail order.

SHOP AROUND

THE LAST AND MOST OBVIOUS piece of advice is that, whatever you're doing, you should shop around. The prices of new and second-hand games can vary widely. *Hexen*, for example, can be bought from anywhere for between £34.99 and £44.99 brand new, and the story's the same for pretty much every PlayStation game. Know your rights, shop carefully, and you shouldn't go wrong. If you do have a real nightmare, though, don't hesitate to write to us and tell us all about it. We'll probably publish any letter to serve as a warning to anyone else.

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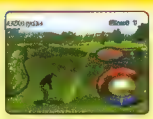
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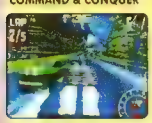
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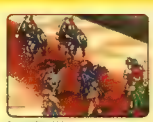
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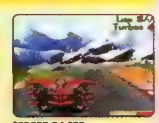
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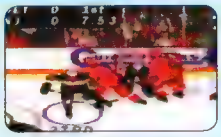
NHL Powerplay due May

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Syndicate Wars due July

Ace Combat 2 due May, June

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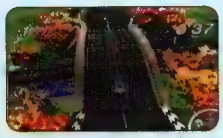
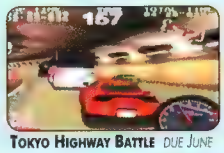
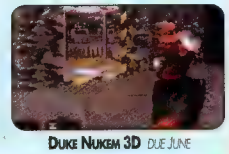
X Men COTA due [illegible]

Rally Cross due June


Need for Speed 2 due May


Tokyo Highway Battle due June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Deathtrap Dungeon	SEPTEMBER
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OF5(6)

The major players

PlayStati PØwer

The PlayStation industry has become a huge monster during the past two years and many people have been instrumental in its growth. Over the next six pages, we detail the 50 most important companies, people and entities that shape the market in Britain today. Here, then, are the 'players' that make up the PlayStation 'mafia'

Ken Kutaragi (Sony)

If anyone deserves to be called Mr PlayStation, it's **Ken Kutaragi**. He did, after all, invent the thing. He started at Sony in the '70s when he helped to create something called 'System G', a real-time 3D special-effects tool for the broadcast industry. The project got him interested in graphic manipulation, and days spent playing *Space Invaders* in arcades got him interested in videogames. Almost two decades later he would bring his work and his hobby together in PlayStation.

Terry Tokunaka

President, Sony Computer Entertainment

Tokunaka is the president of Sony Computer Entertainment in Japan. He masterminded the initial launch of PlayStation on December 3, 1994. At the time, Nintendo had the Japanese industry in a vice-like grip, with retailers and developers reluctant to even consider supporting a rival. Tokunaka's achievement was to present a product, a price and a marketing campaign that made PlayStation impossible to ignore. It is now the best-selling console in Japan and its against-the-odds home-turf triumph was crucial in creating the global success that it now enjoys.

Chris Deering

President, Sony Computer Entertainment Europe

As boss of Sony Computer Entertainment Europe, **Deering** would have been first in the firing line if PlayStation had failed, so it seems only fair that he should get the lion's share of the credit now that it's become an unqualified success. Under his guidance Sony have become the runaway market leader in Europe, more dominant than in either Japan or the US. For the record, PlayStation's European installed base stood at just over two million at the start of the year and will be budging the three million by January 1, 1998.

Juan Montes

General Manager of Software Development, SCE Europe

Basically **Montes** looks after all European-based development for PlayStation. This involves liaising with third party publishers but, more particularly, controlling SCEE's internal projects, the best of which has probably been *NBA '97* to date. Next up is *Porsche Challenge* followed by a speed-boat game called *Rapid Racer*.

Geoff Glendenning

UK Marketing Director, SCE Europe

Not only is **Glendenning** responsible for commissioning a lot of Sony's advertising, but he also made sure that – particularly in the machine's early days – the PlayStation was seen by the right people in the right places. He put units in chill-out rooms at super-clubs like London's Ministry of Sound, Liverpool's Cream. He got PlayStations in the hospitality [illegible] *Top of the Pops* and even took PlayStation on the road, setting up [illegible] areas at music festivals [illegible]

Phil Harrison

Ex Communications Director, SCE Europe. Now Vice President R&D, SCE America

Harrison became SCE's very first employee in 1992 – three years before the launch of the PlayStation. Up until his departure for the States he was consistently the console's most vocal and influential evangelist. He was particularly effective in galvanising support from European developers and publishers in the pre-launch period.

[illegible] Nathan

[illegible] Sony Entertainment, New York.

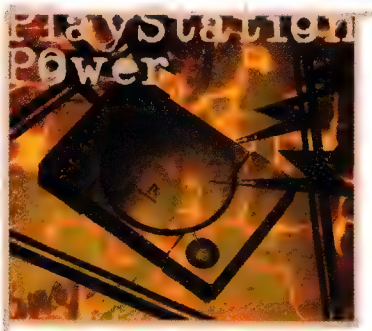
Olivier [illegible] figure outside [illegible] PlayStation project to Sony Corporation, which meant he had the power to veto or okay all of the really major decisions. He established SCE America, overlooked the European and US launch and, perhaps most [illegible] the model acquisition of Psygnosis [illegible]

Simons Palmer

Sony's ad agency

Simons Palmer got the Sony gig largely through their consistently brilliant Nike work. Their brief was not only to sell PlayStation, but to make it [illegible] and the most recent [illegible] for the price cut and Platinum have been impressive.

The major players



MacLaurin Communications

Working alongside Sony's own PR and marketing teams, MacLaurin have helped place PlayStations in the country's hippest clubs as well as garnering coverage in the opinion-forming-style press such as *id* and *The Face*.

Bizarre Creations

If they never do another thing, Bizarre Creations have already claimed their place in PlayStation history through *F1* (published by Psygnosis), one of the most ambitious and brilliantly realised (if slightly flawed) games ever released. As it is, the company are hard at work on a sequel, due in October, which the smart money says will be even better. Splendid.

Sony DADC

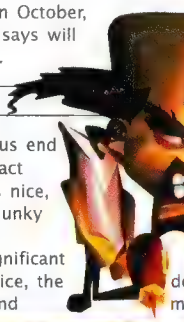
Not exactly the glamorous end of the market, but the fact that the PlayStation runs nice, shiny CDs rather than clunky old cartridges is a huge advantage. The most significant plus point is that the price, the cost of manufacturing and duplication CDs is far lower than the cost of making cartridges. This means that the best new PlayStation games sell for around £45 while the classics on the Platinum label go for under 20 quid. The cheapest Nintendo 64 games are over £50, the most expensive come in at a staggering £75. DADC is the Sony subsidiary that produces CDs for the PlayStation – up to 500,000 of 'em every day.

Electronic Arts

Electronic Arts, with an annual turnover of over $500 million, are the biggest software producers in the world – and their console of choice is PlayStation. They've sold more games on PlayStation than anyone but Sony. They produced the Christmas number-one last year (*FIFA '97*) and the Christmas number-one the year before (*FIFA '96*, in case you couldn't guess). They've also given us *Soviet Strike*, *Andretti Racing* and, through affiliate label Fox Interactive, *Die Hard Trilogy*. This year they plan to release a staggering 25 PlayStation titles.

Naughty Dog

Odd name, odd game. Naughty Dog are the Californian development team behind *Crash Bandicoot*. Crash was supposed to be Sony's very own Sonic or Mario, a sort of mascot for the PlayStation itself. In Europe that goal was never achieved, although in Japan the little feller can't go out without a bodyguard. Thankfully, the game itself doesn't betray any cynical marketing-based aims. It's a corkingly-playable platformer and its one of only a handful of PlayStation games to have sold one million copies around the world.



Sony

Obvious, really, but the importance of the size and strength of the company behind PlayStation can't be over-stressed. Actually, that's not quite accurate: it's not just that they're the corporate muscle pushing PlayStation, but their willingness to flex it vigorously and regularly on behalf of a mere console, that has been key. After all, Matsushita – the biggest electronics company in the world – was behind 3DO, a 32-bit console launched in the early '90s which sank without trace. But while size isn't everything, Sony's sheer bulk has played a major part in the PlayStation's success. To give you some idea of the weight behind that little grey box in the corner, Sony's annual turnover is around $50,000 million. They employ more than 60,000 people in nearly 1,000 offices and subsidiaries around the world. They are nearly 10 times the size of Nintendo and 15 times the size of Sega.

The founders of Sony, with Akio Morita pictured on the far right.

Designers Republic

A ridiculously trendy team of graphic artists who were drafted in by Psygnosis not only to produce the logos and lettering for *Wipeout* and *Wipeout 2097*, but also to transplant the *Wipeout* look on to a range of merchandising such as T-shirts, jackets and DJ bags. In terms of quality, these took game spin-offs to a new high and also became fashionable items in their own right in clubland – or so a young person tells us.

Squaresoft

Okay, so Squaresoft haven't actually released any PlayStation games in Britain as yet, but they have put out a block-busting best-seller in Japan and their support for the format is tremendously significant. Traditionally, Squaresoft have been a fixture in Nintendo's camp. In fact they've sold more games for Nintendo machines than any other company, apart from Nintendo themselves, and their *Final Fantasy* series of RPGs is the second most successful gaming franchise ever, after *Mario*. Early last year, however, the Japanese publishers shocked the world by announcing that they would be producing six new games for Sony's PlayStation, including *Final Fantasy VII*. At the same time they

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The major players

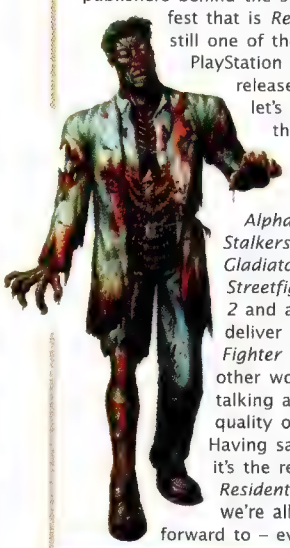
announced they would cut all SNES development and that they were 'unlikely' to support the N64. The latest version of the hit series duly arrived on PlayStation only in Japan a few months ago. Two million copies were sold in the first two days. Sales have now cruised past five million. The game's due to arrive in the UK this autumn.

Retail

Known in the industry as 'the sharp end', retail can make or break a product depending on how they feel about the product and, just as importantly, the company behind it. Retailers like Sony and they love PlayStation. It is the most-stocked (and best-selling) console in huge chains and tiny independents alike. In a poll of the UK's 100 leading outlets in trade title *CTW* at the end of last year, PlayStation was voted Leading Hardware System and Leading Software Format, while Sony picked up the gongs for Best Marketing and Hero of the Year.

Capcom

Capcom are – quite rightly – most commonly hailed as the Japanese publishers behind the sublime gore fest that is *Resident Evil* – still one of the finest PlayStation games ever released. But let's not forget that Capcom have also given us *Streetfighter Alpha*, *Dark Stalkers*, *Star Gladiators* and *Streetfighter Alpha 2* and are about to deliver *Super Puzzle Fighter II Turbo*. In other words we're talking about a quality outfit here. Having said all that, it's the release of *Resident Evil 2* that we're all looking forward to – even if it does look increasingly likely that we'll have to wait until early '98.



Revolution

Not exactly a development powerhouse, but by delivering *Broken Sword* – the first true adventure game for the PlayStation – UK independent Revolution did prove that there is life beyond beat 'em ups and sports sims.

Westwood

On the PC Las Vegas-based Westwood are massive. *Command & Conquer* and *Red Alert* are two of the most successful games of all time, both with over one million sales under their belts. The former was successfully converted on to PlayStation last year and, just like Revolution, broke new ground by setting the standard for strategy games for the format. *Red Alert* is due in September.

id

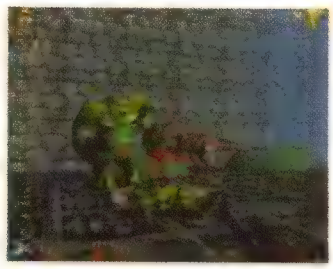
Doom remains a hot property, but in 1995, when the PlayStation was launched, it was on fire: without doubt the most talked-about, sought-after and drooled-over name in computer gaming. It was tremendously significant, therefore, that the PlayStation was the first console to boast a version of this modern classic.

Sega

In Europe it was Sega, not Nintendo, which, with the Mega Drive and *Sonic The Hedgehog*, dragged videogaming out of the anorak-flavoured doldrums it had been languishing in since the demise of the *Space Invader*-zapping Atari 2600. Sega made consoles sexy and paved the way for the next generation of gaming. Respect, therefore, is due. Since the mid-'90s collapse of 16-bit, however, the firm haven't really been at the races. There's no need to get all tribal and bang on about the gulf in quality between Sega's Saturn and Sony's PlayStation; the sales figures speak for themselves. PlayStation's European-installed base will be around five million by the end of the year, Saturn will still be some way short of the two million mark. Put harshly, Sega have played a major role in Sony's success, mainly through capitulating so completely.

Nintendo

Although never as sexy as Sega in Europe, Nintendo's SNES did play a part in resurrecting the console market in the early '90s so, again, a nod of acknowledgement is deserved. The company's chief contribution to the success of PlayStation, however, has been their abject failure to co-ordinate a decent launch of the Nintendo 64. The cartridge-based machine was first scheduled to hit Europe for autumn '95. In the end it arrived in March '97 (a year and a half late) with a price tag of £250 (twice as expensive as PlayStation) and just



four available games – some selling for as much as £70 (frankly, ridiculous). By leaving the way clear for so long and then arriving so tamely, Nintendo have been a real help in establishing PlayStation as Europe's number-one console.

Konami

One of the oldest and most famous names in gaming, Konami's light seemed to be fading a few years ago as the hits and the inspiration

Official UK Playstation Magazine

Simply the biggest-selling magazine dedicated to PlayStation in the world. Review scores in *PSM* have so much influence over how a game performs that software houses have been known to offer the staff huge sums of money, flashy cars and beach-front property in California, just to turn a 7 into an eight. Well, actually, they haven't, but we really do think they should.

CTW

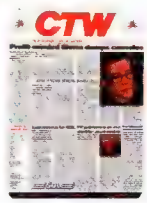
From an unlikely base in Hitchin, Hertfordshire, trade newspaper *CTW* actually operates at the heart of the global games industry. Its news and editorial views help mould opinion from Tokyo to LA and all over Europe. *CTW* can't be said to have been a supporter of PlayStation, but its accurate reporting of an unqualified success story has helped spread the word among the powers that be and the companies that count.

THE FACE

The UK-based-but-world-famous style bible was a big supporter of PlayStation in the console's earliest days, putting it in front of Britain's brightest young things and giving it a stylish seal of approval that helped make videogaming fashionable once again.

EDGE

A sister publication of *PSM*, *EDGE* is a sort of videogame equivalent of *The Face* – trendy, a bit cliquey, and always at least a couple of steps ahead of the pack. *EDGE* was writing about PlayStation well before any other magazines were interested and its obvious enthusiasm for the machine rubbed off on to the hundreds of developers that read it religiously.



STOMP, KILL & ENJOY

PlayStation Magazine STARPLAYER

"MechWarrior 2 is without doubt, one of the finest titles on the PlayStation... Buy, buy, buy and stomp, kill & enjoy."

9/10

Official PlayStation Magazine

PLAY CLASSIC

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dried up. The PlayStation's given the veterans a new lease of life and three sports games stand out: *NBA: In The Zone 2*, *International Track & Field* and *International Superstar Soccer Deluxe*. A follow-up to *Superstar Soccer*, *ISS Pro* – due out in June – already looks like it could be the best footie game to hit PlayStation so far.

Liam Howlett

Knob Twiddler, The Prodigy

Young master Liam's a sort of a token entry, really, representing the many dozens of celebs that sprinkled a little stardust over PlayStation – mainly in the console's early days – either by being pictured with one or mentioning it in interviews. Damon Albarn was often seen deep in concentration in front of a TV set, Robbie Fowler was keen on the console, Prince Naseem posed in confrontational style with a joypad in his hand, and many others all helped to push PlayStation out of the gaming ghetto and into the glamorous mainstream. Howlett gets the nod, however, because The Prodigy contributed to the *Wipeout 2097* album and a music magazine interview with him began with the journalist explaining how she had to wait an hour and a half while ol' Firestarting feller played *Tekken*. It was subtle mentions of the PlayStation's ability to capture people's attentions that really established the console as hardware desirable by even the hippest gaming cynics. In that respect Liam was certainly something of a firestarter.

Gremlin

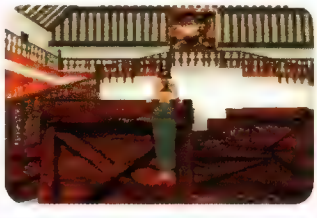
Loaded and *Reloaded* were mindless fun, but Gremlin secure their place in this hall of fame through the excellent *Actua* series of sports games. *Soccer* and *Golf* remain the best of their type on the PlayStation. Next up is *Golf 2* and *Tennis*. Gremlin's cachet was recently increased, incidentally, when they acquired Scottish developers DMA, the team behind the legendary *Lemmings* series of games.

Ocean

Having merged with Infogrames, Ocean are now part of the world's largest European-owned publishing group which, by definition, makes their ongoing support of PlayStation important. They also warrant a mention as the company behind *Tunnel B1*, *Project X2* and the excellent *Worms*.

Lara Croft

Brave of heart, buxom of bosom and derring of do, Lara Croft is the biggest videogame star to emerge in the '90s so far. There's already talk of an animated TV series and even a movie. Her stellar rise has been aided by the fact that she's the lead character in *Tomb Raider* – possibly the greatest and most original game ever published on PlayStation. The sequel's due in the final quarter of this year.



PlayStation prodigy, Lara Croft.

Namco

Alongside Psygnosis, Namco have provided the best software support for PlayStation from day one. Sony's **Phil Harrison** described *Ridge Racer* simply as, 'the reason we built PlayStation'. Three of Namco's titles recently featured in our exclusive Top 50 games feature (*PSM*17): *Ridge Racer Revolution*, *Ridge Racer* and *Tekken 2* (one of only two games ever to receive maximum marks from *PSM*). The Japanese publishers have just renewed their partnership with Sony, ensuring that titles such as *Time Crisis*, *Point Blank* and – steady now – *Tekken 3* will appear on PlayStation first.

Richard Milner

Milner is the man that puts together the consistently brilliant playable demo CDs that adorn the front of this very publication month after month. He also produces discs for retailers so that you can try games before you buy in-store.

Guy Pearce

UK PR Executive, SCEI

When, how and where a game is previewed and reviewed is one of the most important factors in any release. **Pearce**'s job is to co-ordinate the flow of information and product to *PSM* and other specialist magazines so that the right games get reviewed at the right time.

Doug Goodwin

UK Sales Director, SCEE

One of the behind-the-scenes stars at Sony, **Goodwin**'s role isn't simply to sell as many units to stores as possible, but also to keep retailers enthusiastic about the product and happy with the Sony service. So far, he has succeeded spectacularly.

Judy Barker

Head of UK Customer Services, SCE Europe

Barker heads up the team that looks after you once you become a PlayStation owner. Not only does he run the Tips Line (0881 505505), he's also responsible for dealing with any faulty equipment. The PlayStation's reliability rating is actually very good, but if any problems do occur Barker's team handle refunds and replacements. Even if your warranty has expired, they offer you the chance to buy a brand new machine for just £55.

Yaroze

Yes, it's an inanimate thing rather than a person or a company, but it could still play a vital role in the PlayStation's future. Yaroze is a low-cost (£549) home development kit which, Sony hope, will re-ignite the back-bedroom programming scene that peaked with the popularity of home computers such as the Amiga in the late '80s, but then all but died with the arrival of keyboard-less consoles such as the SNES and Mega Drive. Yaroze could tap into a wealth of amateur creativity, produce the *Tomb Raider* of the 21st century, or even inspire the next Peter Molyneux.

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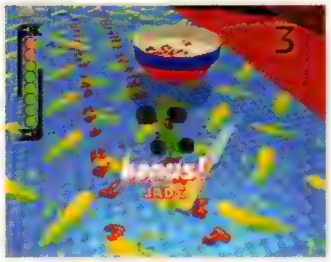
He's mad, bad and all nads

Codemasters

True veterans, Codemasters made their name and (believe it or not) a small fortune banging out games at £1.99 for 8-bit micros like the Sinclair Spectrum and Commodore 64. Since then they've become some of the most respected independent publishers in the market, enjoying particular success on the Mega Drive in the early '90s. It took a year for the relatively small Coders team to transfer their talents on to PlayStation, and when they did their first release, *Sampras Extreme Tennis*, was sadly disappointing. Their second title, *Micro Machines V3*, however, was really rather marvellous. It earned itself a very juicy 9/10 from our good selves, and promptly raced to the top of the charts. It's just been followed up with *Jonah Lomu Rugby*.



Taito

Japanese coin-op company Taito are responsible for the original *Space Invaders*, a true landmark title in gaming history and many people's introduction to the delights of all things zappy. It has also, through their home development division, made a significant contribution to the PlayStation with *Bust-A-Move*, quite possibly the most addictive puzzle game ever created.

Crystal Dynamics

They might have been overshadowed slightly, chart-wise, by some more powerfully-marketed offerings, but Crystal Dynamics' *Pandemonium* undoubtedly ranks as one of the best games released last year. An imaginative platformer, the game stands alongside Sony's own *Crash Bandicoot* as one of the finest examples of the genre on PlayStation. Ironically the more ambitious but less well executed hack 'n' slay title, *Legacy Of Kain* has just given the company a US number one.

Williams

As the firm behind the *Mortal Kombat* series, Williams have been one of the most successful coin-op companies of the '90s. *MK* has also, of course, spawned many home console hits, particularly on the SNES and Mega Drive. *MK3* and *MK Trilogy* have both appeared on the PlayStation, but in the beat 'em up stakes they've been overshadowed by Namco's *Tekken* masterpieces. Williams' best effort so far was actually *Final Doom*. Next up is *War Gods*.

GT Interactive

Three years ago, very few people in the European games industry had heard of GT Interactive. Now they have become one of the five biggest software houses in the world. Their success has been based largely on long-term deals, which have given them the publishing rights to products from id and Williams. Hits from GT Interactive so far include: *Mortal Kombat 3*, *Mortal Kombat Trilogy*, *Doom* and *Final Doom*.

Peter Molyneux

Bullfrog are undoubtedly among the most successful and possibly the most widely respected developers in the world. Bought by Electronic Arts in 1995 for $40 million, after making their name with titles such as *Populous*, *Theme Park* and *Magic Carpet* on the PC, Bullfrog have only given us tantalising glimpses of their talent on the PlayStation, particularly with souped-up versions of *Magic Carpet* and *Theme Park*. The eagerly-anticipated *Syndicate Wars* is due this summer, while *Populous 3* and *Dungeon Keeper* lurk somewhere on the horizon. Meanwhile the games industry is buzzing with rumours that Molyneux is about to leave Bullfrog and set up a new team. Whatever he does, and wherever he does it, Molyneux will remain an important player.

Psygnosis

When Sony bought Psygnosis in 1993 for a sum rumoured to have been £15-20 million, they set the Liverpool-based publisher a challenge: to provide a series of games that not only show consumers what PlayStation can do but also set the benchmark for other developers to aim at. And that's exactly what Psygnosis did: *Wipeout*, *Destruction Derby*, *Formula 1*, *Adidas Power Soccer*, *Wipeout 2097*, *Destruction Derby 2* – every one a winner. Alongside Namco, Psygnosis continue to deliver the best games and biggest hits in the PlayStation universe.

LucasArts

LucasArts are an offshoot of *Star Wars* creator George Lucas' movie empire, LucasFilms. LucasArts' first two PlayStation efforts, *Dark Forces* and *Rebel Assault 2*, have been disappointing in the mediocrity. The publishers' track record on other formats, particularly the PC, proves they are capable of far greater things. They are also, of course, the custodians of the hotter-than-toast *Star Wars* licence which means, with the original movies on re-release and a new trilogy in production, their stock can only rise.

Tony Bourne

The gatekeeper, sort of. **Bourne** heads up Sony's QA (Quality Assurance) division. He tests every single PlayStation game scheduled for release to see not only that it measures up to technical standards (ie. no bugs), but also that it is of sufficient quality to be presented in front of the PlayStation public. His goal is to prevent a load of old tosh flooding the market. So far he seems to be doing a pretty good job.

Kelly Flock

Sony's US development arm, which **Flock** runs, might have come up short on a few occasions, but it certainly hit the target with *Twisted Metal World Tour*. More, please.

Fergus McGovern

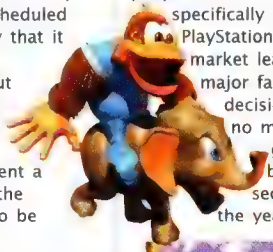
McGovern was the head of the largest independent development team in Europe until, in October, '95, Probe was acquired by Acclaim for $45 million. (Jo Bonner)

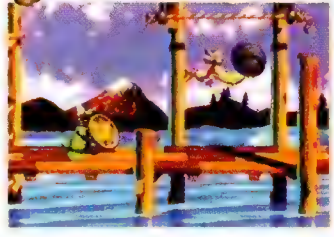
Ray MacCuish

Although Chris Deering heads up Sony's pan-European effort, **MacGuire** is the man directly in charge of the UK effort and therefore responsible for making Britain the most successful territory in Europe and the most profitable (in relation to headcount) in the world. The installed base was already at 750,000 at the start of the year and should be cruising past one million just about now.

Eighth Wonder

A very new, and potentially very important, development team. Eighth Wonder are made up of disillusioned defectors from Rare, who have been strong supporters of Nintendo for years. Their games include the *Donkey Kong Country* series for SNES and *Killer Instinct* for the N64. Just last month, however, six of Rare's key people left to form Eighth Wonder specifically to work on PlayStation, citing 'Sony's clear market leadership' as the major factor behind their decision. A major *coup* and no mistake. The first game from EW will be out in the second half of the year.





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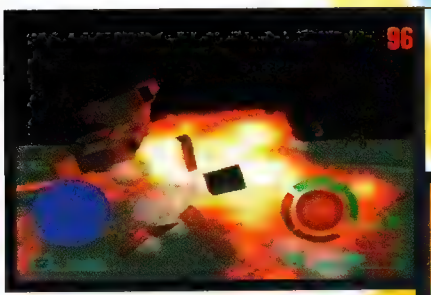
SWITCH

PSM RATING

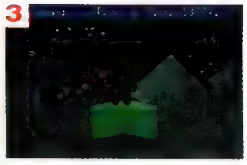
10	*PSM* is prepared to award a golden '10' to games which are perfect.
9	A splendid piece of software – recommended without prejudice.
8	Very, very good. Add it to your collection forthwith, if not sooner.
7	A great title with minor irritations, but still a worthy purchase.
6	A case of 'Why did they do that?'. Playable but with some dodgy bits.
5	Straight average. Unoriginal or flawed, but still worth buying – just.
4	Below average. Probably has some serious gameplay or lifespan flaws.
3	Looking pretty bad. Maybe worth borrowing for a couple of days.
2	Borderline crap. Technically inept, poorly structured and short-lived.
1	A product without merit of any sort. Next beyond human endurance.
0	Black coffee coaster in the shape of a CD. Dreadful, awful tat.
	Special games which we think deserve to go on your 'must buy' list are also awarded our StarPlayer logo.

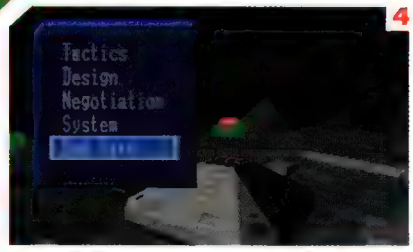
PlayTest

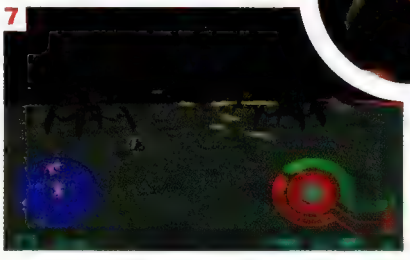
REVIEWED

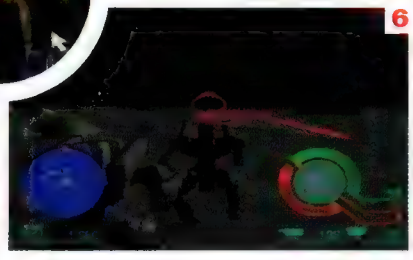


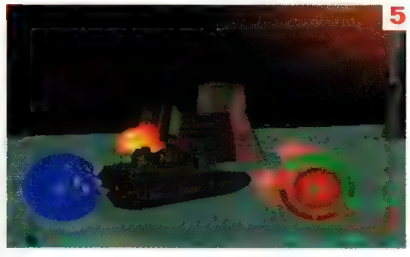
Carnage Heart	96
Bubble Bobble 2	100
Swagman	101
Epidemic	102
K-1 The Arena Fighters	105
Psychic Force	106
Actua Soccer Club Edition	108
Spider	111
WCW Vs The World	112
Super Puzzle Fighter II	114
Need For Speed 2	117
Vandal-Hearts	118
NHL PowerPlay Hockey '96	123
Allied General	124
Transport Tycoon	126
Soccer '97	129











[1] Tank OKEs are tough, but clumsy in their movement. [2] This OKE wasn't up to scratch. [3] The tactical map where you give orders to your units. [4] The main menu lets you choose what to do next. [5, 6, 7] Each type of OKE and weapon system has its strengths and weaknesses. [8] You're given a fixed budget to complete each map, with the odd bonus, depending on how well your boss thinks you're doing.

Carnage Heart

If you thought you'd seen everything that big robot games have to offer, prepare to think again...

The Official PlayStation Magazine STARPLAYER

Let's face it, big robots are nothing new for Sony's grey box of tricks, or for computer games in general. After all, Japanese Manga and animé are full of the things, so it's no surprise that they quickly made their way into numerous games. It wasn't long before America caught on, and games have been featuring all manner of mecha for some time, recently culminating in Activision's superb *MechWarrior 2* (*PSM*18).

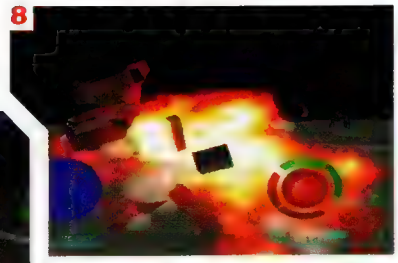
At first glance, then, *Carnage Heart* might not look anything new or innovative. The graphics are certainly very slick, with some great robot designs, but then we've come to expect great graphics from the PlayStation. In this case, though, appearances are deceptive. Rather than being just another 3D action game in which you choose some weapons for your robotic suit and stomp your way through a series of missions, *Carnage Heart* is something quite different. The robots in this game are just that – robots. When they come face to face with the enemy, the result isn't determined by your lightning-fast joypad skills and shrewd tactics, but by programs that tell them what to do. Programs that you create for them. *Carnage Heart*, then, is a strategy game. A unique strategy game, and a very good one.

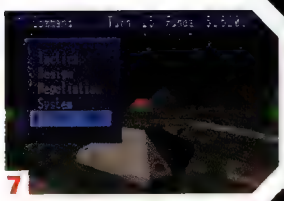
The game is set in the future of 2073. The Earth's resources have been used up, and mankind has turned to space for its needs. Both the Moon and Mars have been stripped of all their valuable minerals, and now deposits have been discovered on three of Jupiter's moons – Callisto, Europa, and Ganymede. Unfortunately,

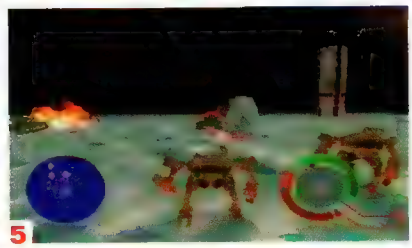
If you're looking for a game that's a little more cerebral than the majority of PlayStation software, or you're a fan of strategy games, then look no further...

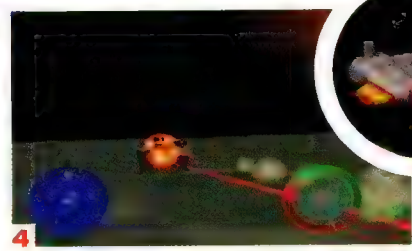
■ PUBLISHER:	**SCEE**	■ DEVELOPER:	**Artdink Corporation**
■ RELEASE DATE:	**May**	■ ORIGIN:	**Japan**
■ PRICE:	**£34.99**	■ STYLE:	**Strategy**

[1] The graphics in the combat section are very impressive. [2] Each programming chip has its own settings. [3] Reviewing a design. [4, 5] The terrain has an important effect on combat. [6, 7] More of the menus [8] Another OKE bites the dust.









the race to exploit these resources has resulted in open conflict between the World Federation and the vast Drakken Group, a conglomerate of hundreds of the world's most powerful companies. You are placed in charge of the World Federation's military efforts and you must win the war against the Drakken Group by defeating its forces on all three of the moons.

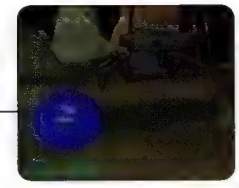
At the start of the game you choose which moon you wish to fight over, which determines the difficulty level of the game – Europa is the easiest, and Callisto the toughest. Each moon is divided into a number of maps, each representing a critical area of conflict. **On each map you must use your robots, called Over Kill Engines, or OKEs to capture all the available bases.** Defeating the enemy on every map captures the moon and wins the game. There's also a single map practice area for new players.

Once you've chosen which moon to fight on, the game proceeds in turns, and is controlled via a system of menus. From the main screen there are five choices – Tactics, Design, Negotiation, System, and End Turn.

The Tactics menu allows you to control your units of OKEs and formulate your strategy. You decide what to build in each base's factories, upgrade the base's production lines, form newly-constructed OKEs into units of up to three robots, assign them fuel and ammunition, and deploy those units on to the map, choosing from simple orders – such as 'move to a specified location', or 'capture an enemy base'. And you alter the orders of any units currently in the field.

The Negotiation menu gives you access to eight of the world's foremost OKE manufacturers. You can choose to buy blueprints for new OKE technology, pay for existing technology to be optimised, or invest in the company's research and development of new equipment. If you spend enough money at a single company, you might also pick up some information about Drakken's purchases from the sales representative.

The System menu lets you save and load games, and adjust the sound options. End Turn, strangely enough, ends your turn. **Both your units and those of the enemy move across the map according to their orders, and any that come into contact fight it out. Each combat is displayed in gorgeous 3D, complete with great effects and satisfyingly solid sound.**

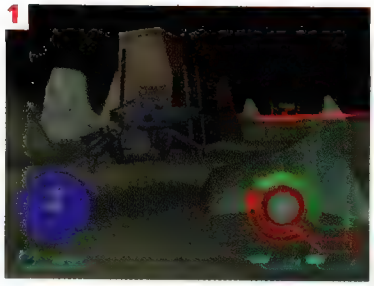


It's the Design menu that lies at the very core of *Carnage Heart*, though, as it's here that you design and program your OKEs – see page 98.

The idea of creating programs and pitting them against each other is nothing new but it's never really been done properly in a commercial game before, and there's nothing quite like it available for the PlayStation.

Although sitting and watching your robots scrap it out might not sound too appealing, it actually makes for an absorbing game. The graphical programming interface is simple to use, and doesn't take too long to learn. Combined with the impressive range of hardware – there are four classes of OKE, each with different strengths and weaknesses, and dozens of engines, weapon systems, ammunition, armour and ▶

Carnage Heart



Line No. 2 Tech Level 8
Design Name Level Cost Proc.
BlastClaw-3a 2 3153 295
BlastClaw-3b 2 3153 295
LazClaw-3b 2 3463 293
Ammo Cost 28/t Proc. 5/t EXIT

(1) Being able to avoid obstacles is a vital part of any OKE program. (2) Choosing which OKE to use is an important aspect of strategy. (3) Avoiding enemy fire is also important.

▶ secondary systems – and the deceptively simple strategy of the main game, this gives *CH* a depth and range of possibilities that's almost frightening. In fact, with the exception of a couple of cumbersome controls and some missing details in the manual (you can repair damaged OKEs by moving them back to a friendly base, for example), the only real weakness of this game is also its key strength – the programming.

The very nature of the game isn't going to appeal to everyone, as it takes time and effort to get into, and requires some serious thinking. And this limited appeal prevents it from receiving a higher score. If the idea appeals to you, though, you'll find *CH* to be thoroughly absorbing and horribly addictive.

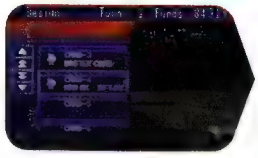
Alternatively...

MechWarrior 2	9/10	*PSM18*
Carnage Heart	8/10	*PSM20*
Krazy Ivan	7/10	*PSM3*

The heart of Carnage Heart

The most important aspect of playing and winning *Carnage Heart* is designing and programming your OKEs...

1. Choose a card



The first thing to do is to select a 'card'. Each card can hold a single OKE design. Of the 28 cards available, three are filled with preset, standard designs – leaving you free to create up to 25 different OKEs in each game. From the card selection screen you can choose a card to design, copy designs from one card to another, delete an unwanted design, and set cards as 'master cards'. Setting a card as a master card means that you've finished the design and are happy with it. Only master card designs can be built in your factories, but once a card is set as a master it's design is fixed – making any modifications will scrap any OKEs already built to that specification.

2. Select the hardware

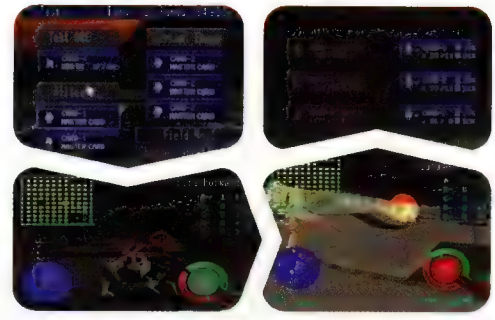
The next step is to design the hardware of your OKE, selecting from the blueprints you've bought from the eight OKE manufacturers. First you select the body, which determines the OKE's basic form, then the engine, which determines its maximum weight. Then you select primary and secondary weapons and ammunition type, the class of CPU, size of fuel tank, armour, and an optional secondary system. You even get a choice of five paint jobs.

3. Create the program

With the hardware chosen, you come to the real heart of your OKE design, and the game itself. By choosing a placing chips on the CPU grid, you create a flowchart that forms the program for the OKE. As the program has the greatest impact on your OKE's performance, it's also the most important aspect of the design. This can be very simple – fire at any enemy for example – or very complex, involving evasion, detection and more.

4. Test your OKE

The last step is to test your design in combat, pitting it against up to three other OKEs to see how it fares, either on its own or in a group. If you're happy, you can set the card as a master and start building it in your bases. Otherwise you can go back to the hardware and software to make alterations and improvements.



VERDICT

Official UK PlayStation Magazine 20

■ GRAPHICS: Slick, smooth, atmospheric 8 ■ GAMEPLAY: Tough but rewarding later 8

■ SOUND: Good effects, moderate music 7 ■ PRESENTATION: Simple interface 8

■ LIFESPAN: On a geological scale 10 ■ ORIGINALITY: New take on an old idea 9

Intensely absorbing, horribly addictive, and superbly presented. It won't be to everyone's taste, but *Carnage Heart* is definitely one of the best strategy games around.

8 out of 10

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Two Players

■ PUBLISHER:	Virgin	■ DEVELOPER:	East Point Software
■ RELEASE DATE:	Out now	■ ORIGIN:	Japan
■ PRICE:	£34.99	■ STYLE:	Platform puzzler

Bubble Bobble 2

Jump around and blow a few bubbles, avoiding spooks and monsters as you go? Not any more – *Bubble Bobble* has moved up a notch in the challenge stakes...

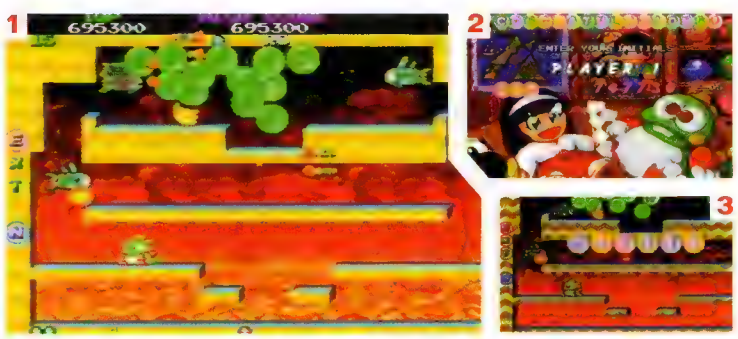
(1) Gone is the limited colour palette of the original. *Bubble Bobble 2* is one of the most colourful games in history. (2) One of the paths takes you through a toy factory. This level has a lot of comedy policemen and clowns fooling around, trying to catch you if they can.

PlayStation Magazine STARPLAYER

Ever since the original game hit the arcades, the *Bubble Bobble* series has had a special place in many gamers' hearts. The combination of cracking gameplay, cutesie graphics and comic sounds is a rather special concoction. Most of the success of the *Bubble* series came from having fantastic home versions, so it was only a matter of time before the latest addition to the series, *Bubble Symphony*, was brought to the PlayStation.

For anyone unfamiliar with the game, you play a dragon who has to defeat various enemies to free your brothers and sisters from the evil clutches of Baron Von Blubb. But unlike the original version, in which you worked through a set route, *BB2* allows you to take several routes throughout the game. It's a nice touch which gives the game a tad more longevity.

Where *BB2* excels itself, though, is as a two-player game. You can choose to work as a team, getting rid of the monsters, collecting the tokens, or you can forget friendship and go all out to beat one another. And it has to be said, trying to thrash your mate is much more satisfying. It's only a shame that your bubble can't inflict any pain. Just think – *Bubble Bobble* death match.



(1) Watch out for the weird fish-like nasties – they're armed. (2) The final curtain. (3) Collect the letters 'EXTEND' and win a special prize.

When you're not trying to oust your opponent, there's the nasty business of tackling the game's baddies, which vary from little sharky things to great big nasty clowns. Then after every 10 levels you're faced with one of 10 bosses, starting off with the relatively harmless Hyper Drunk character (yes, that really is his name) who bombards you with empties, before meeting the nastier specimens.

As the original version showed, when the gameplay is this good, you don't need fantastic graphics. Unfortunately the sound isn't as good it could be, but it doesn't get in the way of your enjoyment. Critics may claim *BB2* lacks sufficient variety, but with 120 screens and 10 boss screens there's enough of a challenge here to keep even the most ardent gamer in front of the screen for quite some time. A game to fall in love with.

Alternatively...

Bubble Bobble	–	not reviewed
Bubble Bobble 2	8/10	*PSM20*

VERDICT

■ GRAPHICS:	Just what you need 8	■ GAMEPLAY:	It's *Bubble Bobble* 9
■ SOUND:	A little disappointing 6	■ PRESENTATION:	Adequate 7
■ LIFESPAN:	Longer than a Duracell 9	■ ORIGINALITY:	A good sequel 7

If you liked the original you'll adore this. An excellent combination of graphics and gameplay make this a game you must buy.

8 out of 10

Official UK PlayStation Magazine 20

■ PUBLISHER:	Eidos Interactive	■ DEVELOPER:	Core Design
■ RELEASE DATE:	June	■ ORIGIN:	UK
■ PRICE:	TBA	■ STYLE:	Arcade adventure

One Player

[1] I knew I shouldn't have had extra chilli. [2] Watch out for the mirrors – they're the gateway to an alternative reality. [3] Break the glass with the magic torch and the key will be yours. [4] By jumping on the cat you find extra power-ups to keep you going. Don't try this at home, kids.

Swagman

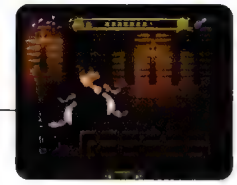
From Eidos comes a cutesie puzzle adventure which makes an over-ambitious attempt at mimicking SNES classic *Zelda*

We ought to get this out of the way immediately – *Swagman* is very, very annoying. It's a shame to start a review with a critical comment but there's no getting away from it.

You play the part of cute little Zack. While he's reading a poem to his sister about the Swagman and his Night Terrors, the window blows open and in floats a Dreamfly, sprinkling the ground with Dreamdew. As she leaves to sprinkle the rest of the town, Zack and Hannah run to the window only to see her captured by the evil Swagman and shrunk into a little cage to be added to the other 11 captured Dreamflies. If this isn't bad enough, Swagman spots the children watching and kidnaps Hannah.

Your mission, if you're bored enough to accept it, is to rescue Hannah and free the Dreamflies. **And to help you in your task is a magic genie who appears out of magic chests, offering advice whenever you need it.** Your progress is plagued, however, with the usual stock of enemies, ranging from puny little insects to huge great monsters. But to make things more equal the developers have supplied the children with a magic torch, which when swiped makes the nasties go away.

Except the ghosts. In all our gaming experience it is difficult to remember a more frustrating enemy than the spooks in *Swagman*, and your reviewer will admit to throwing down the joypad on a number of occasions. **The problem is, you can't kill the little pests. They just disappear for a few seconds – the same few seconds it takes you to recover from being hit by said ghosts.**



The most redeeming feature of the game is the puzzle element. Quite often you'll need to spend a few minutes working them out before you reach any solutions. It's worthwhile using Zack and Hannah as a partnership to complete the game – for instance, in some of the later levels you need to get Zack to jump on his sister's shoulders to reach certain doors.

There's nothing much wrong with the concept behind *Swagman*, which bears obvious similarities to 16-bit games like *Zelda* and *Zombies*, it's just that the execution's poor. The *3D Studio*-rendered sprites are sharply drawn and the animation is adequate but they're nothing to write home about. The in-game music, on the other hand, is superb and wouldn't be out of place in a Tim Burton film. Alas, there's just not enough of the game to give it our full recommendation. *Swagman* tries very hard to please, but is too cute and too frustrating for our tastes.

Alternatively...

Swagman	6/10	*PSM20*
Little Big Adventure	8/10	*PSM19*
Casper	8/10	*PSM13*

VERDICT

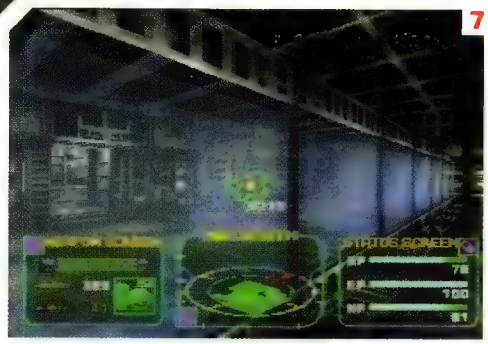
■ GRAPHICS:	Bright and cute 7	■ GAMEPLAY:	Too frustrating 5
■ SOUND:	Very cinematic 9	■ PRESENTATION:	It looks alright 7
■ LIFESPAN:	Plenty to it 6	■ ORIGINALITY:	Obviously not 5

We tried hard to like *Swagman*. But its infuriatingly poor control system lets frustration get in the way of enjoying what could be a decent game.

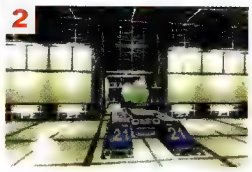
6 out of 10

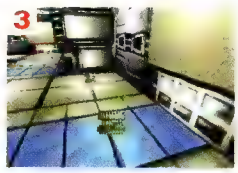
Epidemic

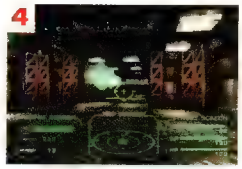
In a vast underground city in the near future, a rebel alliance battles against an evil corporation. And you're the key player

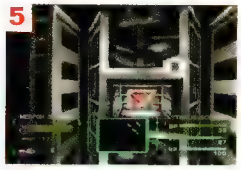


(1) She's all yours... (2) A big boss robot. Look out for its heat-seeking missiles. (3) Some ammunition carelessly left lying around. (4) Shoot. Kill. (5) A key. (6) Spotted by a security camera. (7) Nice transparency effects.









This game is the sequel to *Kileak The Blood*, given 4/10 in *PSM*1 and dismissed as being atmospheric but rather dull. What we have here is essentially another *Doom* clone, but with the twist that you're manning a personal combat robot as you plough through various levels of puzzles and robotic monsters seeking to overcome the evil corporation that threatens the future of mankind.

Epidemic has a distinctly cinematic feel, the format of which will be recognisable to anyone who has played *Resident Evil*. **Scattered every so often throughout the levels are little set-piece animations that combine to tell an intriguing story.** There are plot twists aplenty, and by the end of the game you'll find that what you started out to do has changed significantly. Cleverly it introduces new elements of plot every so often that enhance the action, changing your mind about some things and also giving you access to new equipment and new goals.

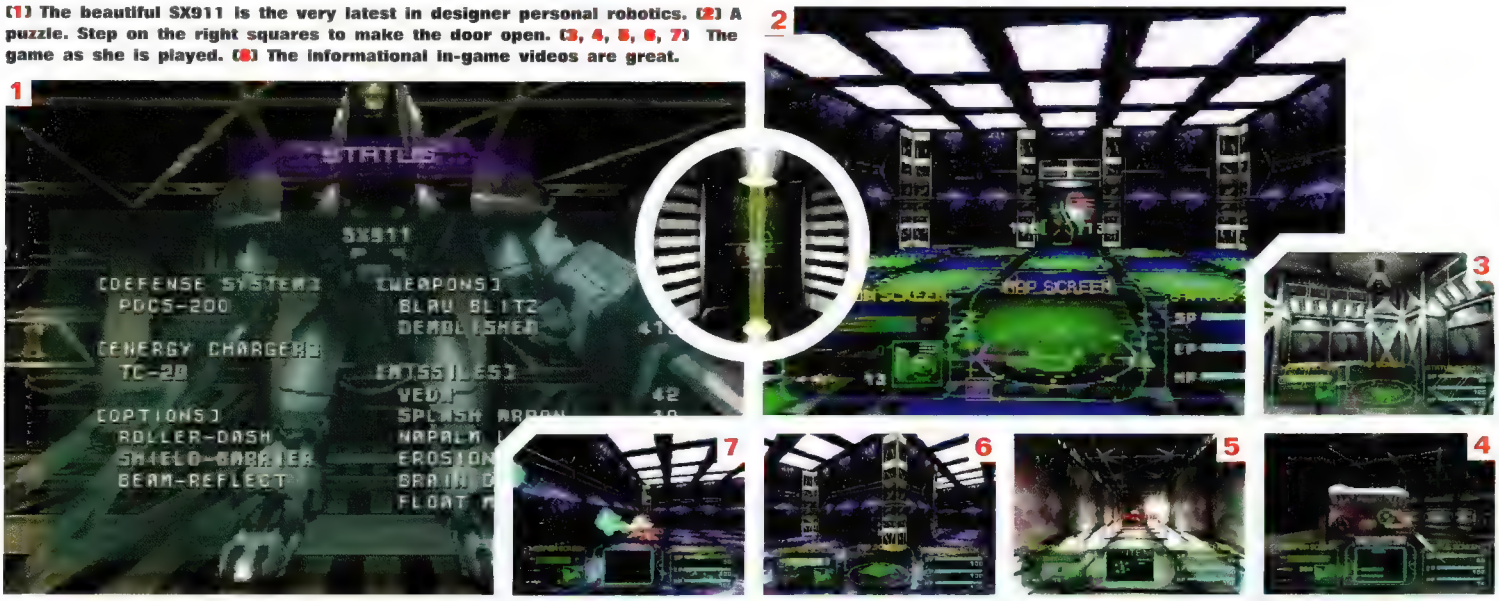
The game is divided up into sections – each two

As you play through the game you slowly but surely increase your tactical nous and discover that the game is designed to encourage this

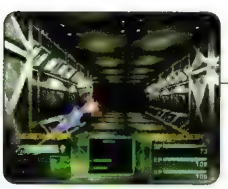
What's the story, morning glory?

2065 AD. Fleeing from the ravaging effects of the dreadful Gigari virus, the human race has retreated underground. In the massive Neurol City, humanity faces a grim and uncertain future. The Biflos Corporation rules the city, through the power of its massive central computer, Cyrus. The corporation is engaged in a systematic programme of genetic manipulation, oppressing the citizens in its quest for the perfect human DNA – DNA which it reckons will

(1) The beautiful SX911 is the very latest in designer personal robotics. (2) A puzzle. Step on the right squares to make the door open. (3, 4, 5, 6, 7) The game as she is played. (8) The informational in-game videos are great.



There's something about the storyline, combined with the action, that creates a highly atmospheric experience. And it's scattered with clever little touches



or three levels big – that act almost as chapters in a book. Every section has a specific goal, and usually a couple of side plots too.

The action itself is pretty straightforward. Every level has its share of robot enemies to defeat and a collection of puzzles to solve. The enemies come in various guises – for the most part they're just patrolling robots that are created in monster generators scattered throughout the level. **This means that, unlike *Doom*, it's rare that you'll ever clear a level of enemies – the generators just create more.**

The patrolling robots come in a variety of shapes and sizes. Some are small and highly mobile flyers, but are just armed with lasers or guns. Others are slow and ponderous ground units armed with rockets of various kinds. Some are completely unarmed – at first these are very annoying as they just seem to be a waste of ammunition, but after a while you realise that you can use the explosions they create when destroyed to blow up more durable, sophisticated enemies.

This is one of the endearing elements of *Epidemic*. As you play through the game you slowly but surely increase your tactical nous and discover that the game is designed to encourage this. Aside from the patrolling enemies, there are stationary ones too. These come in two forms, both of which are attached to the ceiling. One kind is just a variety of a robotic gun that targets you and keeps firing until you destroy it. The other is a surveillance camera which, once it locks on to you, sounds the alarm, causing all the patrolling robots on the level to come streaming towards your position.

Finally, on the enemy front, there are occasional bosses. Usually very tough to defeat, these often appear with an accompanying animated sequence and a plot twist. Each boss is unique, and it often takes a couple of attempts before you work out how to defeat them.▶

ensure the survival of the human race. What the corporation has lost sight of is the need for love, trust and dignity in any human equation and thus its plan is fatally flawed. Luckily, a group of rebels calling themselves DelSol has risen up to defy the might of the Biflos corporation. You are Masao, a young man who was once a part of the DelSol alliance, but after a terrible accident on your last mission you gave it all up to live peacefully with your

Epidemic

All systems go

One of the rather neat things about *Epidemic* is the way that the usual maps and information screens of a *Doom*-clone have been made sensible. All the information you need is available as part of your robot's on-board computer system which offers the following functions:

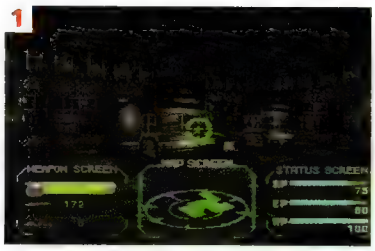
ITEMS
Shows you what you've picked up. Occasionally careful study of these items is needed to crack codes and the like.

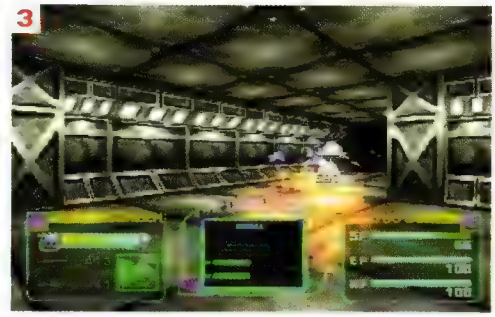
MAPS
Shows you the level you're currently on, as well as detailing the areas that you've explored and those that you haven't.

STATUS
Your health and status is displayed here as well as information about your mech and the options it is currently configured for.

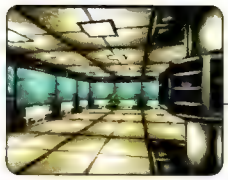
WEAPONS
Tells you what weapons you're currently packing and allows you to switch between the different types

OPTIONS
Allows you to configure your heads-up display the way you like it. The pop-up menus can be turned on and off.





(1) There's a little security robot in here somewhere. (2) There's the blighter. Shoot quickly. (3) Another enemy disappears in a satisfying explosion.



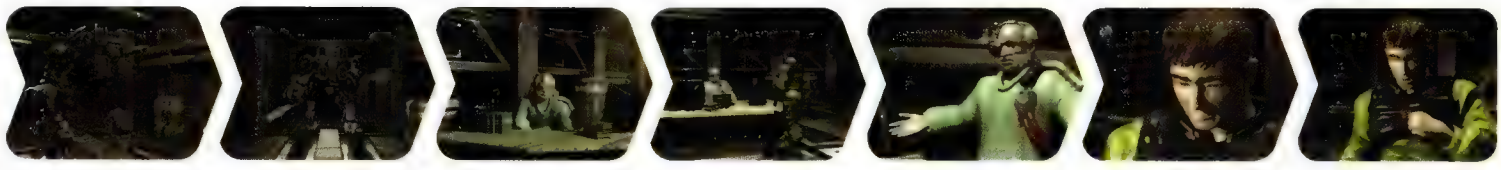
▶ The puzzles in *Epidemic* are fairly ordinary, with keycards to collect to get through doors and occasionally codes to remember. There's a good variety of these, however, and there's definitely plenty here to keep your mind active. In addition, each level has some secret rooms that are much harder to figure out a way into. These rooms usually provide you with some form of enhanced equipment – tougher armour, more powerful lasers, and so on – that are not essential to your progress in the game, but do help make life easier.

I *Epidemic* is excellent fun. The graphics aren't exactly mind-blowing, but they do a very adequate job – and you could hardly describe it as a hugely original game. But the whole is greater than the sum of its parts. There's something about the storyline combined with the action that creates a highly atmospheric experience. In addition, *Epidemic* is scattered throughout with clever little touches that add a lovely polish to what might otherwise have been a bit of a dull game. There are information points, for example, which, when activated, play a short video on the screens in the room. There are transparent information consoles in master control rooms that show you which rooms have just been unlocked. And there's a story which has every romantic adventure cliché you could ask for, from the death of a friend through to the realisation that – hey – your dad *was* a hero after all. Best of all, though, is the way that – just when you think you know what's going on – the game throws unexpected twists at you.

It's not *Tomb Raider*, but *Epidemic* provides a refreshing twist on a rather tired genre. It's hard to pin down what makes it so good – it's a combination of things rather than one revolutionary gameplay experience – but good it undeniably is.

Alternatively...

Doom	9/10	*PSM2*
Final Doom	9/10	*PSM3*
Mech Warrior 2	9/10	*PSM18*
Epidemic	8/10	*PSM20*
Alien Trilogy	8/10	*PSM5*
Exhumed	8/10	*PSM18*
Tenka	8/10	*PSM18*
Dark Forces	5/10	*PSM17*
Kileak The Blood	4/10	*PSM1*



girlfriend, Layla. Unluckily, she has contracted the dreaded Gigari virus, and so you seek out your old DelSol mentor, Jim, and strap yourself back into your combat robot (or mech) to go and seek a cure. Before you know it, you're caught up in a tide of events that threatens to take over your life.

VERDICT

■ GRAPHICS:	**Functional 7**	■ GAMEPLAY:	**Well-designed 8**
■ SOUND:	**Good robot stomping noises 7**	■ PRESENTATION:	**Excellent videos 8**
■ LIFESPAN:	**Lengthy 8**	■ ORIGINALITY:	***Doom*, innit? 5**

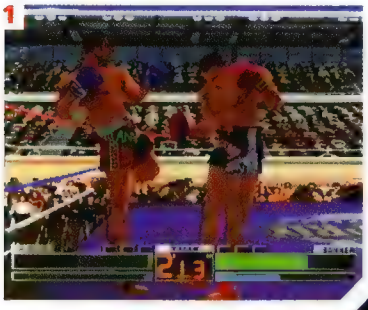
Epidemic's nothing new, but it does have a certain hard-to define charm, as well as lots of clever little touches, that let you forgive it that.

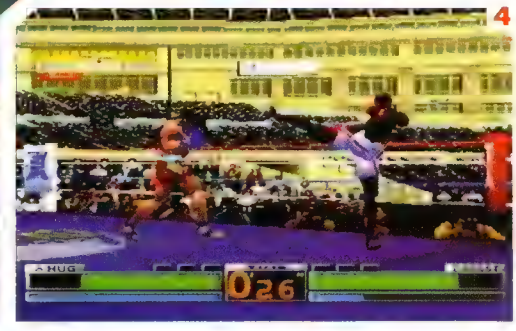
8 out of 10

■ PUBLISHER:	T-HQ	■ DEVELOPER:	Kokopeli Digital Studios
■ RELEASE DATE:	Out now	■ ORIGIN:	Japan
■ PRICE:	£44.99	■ STYLE:	Beat 'em up

Two Players

PlayTest





Witness *K-1*'s fierce and unrelenting violence: (1) Ouch! That hurt. (2) Ducking, diving and thumping action. (3) Take that, you blighter. (4) A swift high kick just misses your head.

K-1 The Arena Fighters

Martial arts make contact with the PlayStation in this vicious two-player kickboxing sim. Shame that it falls flat on its face...

Kickboxing is still a sport shrouded in mystery, but *K-1* sets out to redress the balance by providing a realistic two-player fight sim, with the additional strange twist of developing Artificial Intelligence for the players. Or so it says here. The memory card acts as a conduit for the players ability and experience. **Four major martial arts – Karate, Kickboxing, Kempo and Kung Fu – are covered as part of the tournament which contains eight individual fighters, each with a special discipline and associated special move.**

One thing strikes you like an unexpected foot in the face after the tantalizing quick-cut movie-style introduction: the overall feel is extremely violent yet frighteningly dull. The players are polygonal 3D creations (like *Tekken*), yet you still do battle in good old 2D. Criminally there's only one camera angle – the solitary option which modifies this rotates the camera through 360°, always keeping the two fighters facing one another on a single 2D plane. Very disappointing. *Victory Boxing* does this thing a whole lot better and while it's generally slower, the changing perspective adds a vital edge to the otherwise relentless slug-'em-out action.

K-1 is quite exciting in the short term (ie the first 10 minutes) but soon some very large cracks begin to appear in game's already chink-filled veneer. The biggest flaw lies with the awkward controls which leave you almost helpless, struggling against the ultra-violent opposition. All might not be lost if you could actually defend yourself, but at times it's like asking for the moon. This makes the matches a random, tooth-grinding affair of button-hammering, all in the hope that your fighter will suddenly get the idea and release his own salvo of deadly violence. Sadly, this hardly ever happens.

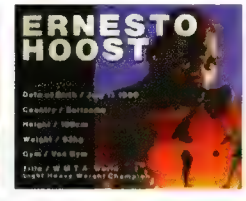
And the Artificial Intelligence, which never seems to appear – unless being kicked to the ground has suddenly become smart – further hampers an experience which is ultimately neither satisfying nor fun.

K-1 had an opportunity to do something different with the beat 'em up formula, but sadly comes across like a poor man's *Tekken*. The moves are near-impossible to find and the 2D perspective helps none either. If you buy this, the only person you'll end up kicking will be yourself.

Alternatively...

Tekken 2	10/10	*PSM#11*
Tekken	9/10	*PSM#2*
Victory Boxing	8/10	*PSM#14*
Toshinden	8/10	*PSM#1*
Toshinden 2	7/10	*PSM#7*
K-1 The Arena Fighters	4/10	*PSM#20*

The opening teaser



***K-1* starts off well enough, with an impressive movie-style intro, but sadly this belies the truly awful gameplay which is to follow.**

VERDICT

■ GRAPHICS:	Angular 6	■ GAMEPLAY:	Generous 4
■ SOUND:	Realistic enough 6	■ PRESENTATION:	Half-baked 5
■ LIFESPAN:	You'll soon become bored 3	■ ORIGINALITY:	Yup 8

A poor show all round. What's the use of a fighting game when you can't find the moves and it beats you to death? Save your money for better alternatives.

4 out of 10

Two Players

Memory card Compatible

(1) Encase your foe in a translucent gem, then give him a right good hammering. (2) That's Wong at the top, doing a dash. Good for avoiding projectile attacks. (3) Some of the attacks are actually quite spectacular. (4) This is clearly no time to pray. Hit him with your wings.

Psychic Force

Take a glimpse at a typically grim Japanese future, with Acclaim's bizarre, new gravity-free beat 'em up

If you take a racing game and make the cars fly, you have *Wipeout*. And if you then take away the road, you have a flight sim, of sorts. But what happens when you have a beat 'em up, make the characters fly and remove the ground? The result is a game that defies description and that goes under the title of *Psychic Force*.

In our society, alleges the plot, there are Psyber Warriors among us who possess incredible powers fuelled by Extra Sensory Perception. These psychokinetic powers, however, are as much a curse as a gift. Don't worry too much about it now, though. This situation isn't due to occur until 2010, but when it does, people suspected of possessing psychic powers will be restrained by the government and be experimented upon. Ultimately they will rebel and escape with the help of an all-powerful Psyber known as, uh, Keith. The conclusion of this unlikely tale is that Keith turns out to be a bad egg, declares war on the whole of humanity and it's up to the other Psyber Warriors to, paradoxically, defend the humans that have been experimenting on them. **As you might expect, this convoluted story of psychic woe merely lays down the foundations for a beat 'em up featuring combatants with a range of special moves and outlandish methods of attack.**

Graphically, the game is fairly unremarkable. The 3D characters are all very interesting and nicely realised, but their level of detail and animation is nothing extraordinary, falling some way below the likes of *Tekken 2*. They look good but lack solidity and suffer from polygonal break-up at times.

But while there's nothing unusual about the characters, the arenas are a different matter altogether. Each character's arena has a different backdrop which plays no part in the action. Over the top of this is drawn a screen-sized, wireframe cube. This is the battle area outside of which the players cannot stray. However within this cube the characters float around in mid-air. This would, of course, make regular beat 'em up moves, such as throws and kicks, a bit redundant, so *Psychic*'s range of attacks is somewhat unusual. There's a Dash option, so you can enter into close combat which consists of punches, grabs and little else. Most of the time, though, you'll find yourself skirting around the edges of the cube, using the characters' psychic and projectile attacks.

This is a perfectly competent combat game, but for most players the bizarre floating combat system could prove a major turn-off

Alternatively...

Tekken 2	10/10	*PSM11*
Soul Blade	9/10	*PSM10*
Tobal No.1	9/10	*PSM10*
Star Gladiator	9/10	*PSM14*
Street Fighter Alpha 2	9/10	*PSM13*
RA Toshinden 2	7/10	*PSM7*
Psychic Force	7/10	*PSM20*

VERDICT

GRAPHICS:	Perfectly adequate 8	GAMEPLAY:	Fine, but not great 7
SOUND:	Not unexpected 7	PRESENTATION:	Great animé intro 8
LIFESPAN:	Easy one player 6	ORIGINALITY:	Unique combat system 8

A perfectly acceptable addition to the vast library of 3D beat 'em ups. But despite its weird floaty gameplay, this is a strictly average offering.

7 out of 10

Official UK PlayStation Magazine 20

■ PUBLISHER:	Acclaim	■ DEVELOPER:	Taito
■ RELEASE DATE:	Out now	■ ORIGIN:	Japan
■ PRICE:	£44.99	■ STYLE:	Beat 'em up

(1) Ignore the airship, it's just there for background decoration. (2) Gates, at the top, can fire missiles from his breasts.

Each character has a basic projectile attack – be it a missile, fireball or laser-like beam shot – but can also access a number of far more potent attacks. For example, Emilio can set up prism reflectors which deflect any subsequent attacks, or invoke the mother of all attacks – the Arch angel.

Like many beat 'em ups, the gameplay only shines when two experienced players are playing head to head. The problem with the one-player mode is that it can be easily beaten by using Dash to avoid the opponents' attacks and by firing off the odd basic projectile attack until you've whittled away your enemies' power bars. Played solo, *Psychic Force* is both easy and unrewarding.

Gamers who are mad for beat 'em ups will find in *Psychic Force* a perfectly competent combat game. But for most, the bizarre floating combat system, which lacks the solidity of ground-based games, could prove a major turn-off. Apart from the game's odd approach to the genre, everything else about it is entirely unremarkable, and you have a title that is to be neither recommended or condemned.

Psyber warriors

We just thought you might like to meet the entire team of combatants.

ROBOTS!

Will the real R2-D2 please stand up?

Above: Dante II scuttles in where humans fear to tread – inside volcanoes! In 1993 a group of eight vulcanologists died doing just this...

Honda has designed an intelligent humanoid robot that can walk around and tighten bolts. However, most of its brain power is used in keeping it upright...

The ROAMS recon-robot sneaks behind enemy lines using satellite guidance and a remotely-controlled video camera to avoid things like traps. And stairs.

A bionic hand. Before long lost limbs will be replaced with devices that are lighter and stronger than the real thing.

How long before robots are doing *your* job? Find out in T3 issue 8

T3 TOMORROW'S TECHNOLOGY TODAY

On sale now! £2.95

Two Players | Memory card Compatible

■ PUBLISHER:	Gremlin	■ DEVELOPER:	In-house
■ RELEASE DATE:	May	■ ORIGIN:	UK
■ PRICE:	TBC (£29.99 or £39.99)	■ STYLE:	Football sim

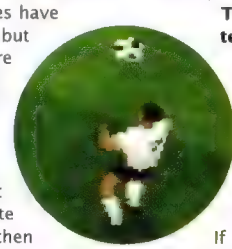
(1) The teams line up for this very important match between Sheffield Wednesday and Arsenal (Barry Davis says that bit splendidly). (2) A chase-cam shot of Newcastle bearing down on goal. (3) A fine view of the action.

Actua Soccer Club Edition

Finding a winning formula and then sticking with it is all well and good as long as the goalposts stay in the same place

Seventeen issues ago *Actua Soccer* received a well-deserved 9/10 in this magazine. Since then there have been other footie games that have come close but haven't quite had the fabulous playability of *Actua*. Gremlin can be forgiven, therefore, for sticking with a winning formula.

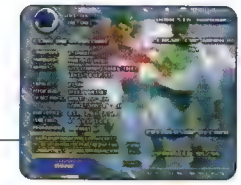
Except it's not winning any more. Times have changed. It may only be 17 months ago, but things move fast in the world of software development and **since their launch both *Adidas Power Soccer '97* and *ISS Pro* have scored goals against *Actua*.** The problem with this *Club Edition* is that's exactly what it is – nothing more and nothing less. The gameplay hasn't changed in any appreciable way and despite the fact that what was a good game then should in theory still be a good game now, everything can be improved – even *Actua Soccer*.



Although it doesn't seem to be a cynical move on Gremlin's part (or maybe we're being horribly naive), simply changing the teams from international squads to national teams – in this case, Premiership clubs – isn't enough to justify the asking price. If you've got the original *Actua*, then be happy – don't bother buying this unless you really want to play a season with your fave team. Stick to playing England against Brazil or Holland, and the enjoyment will be just as intense and exciting as any match between Liverpool and Newcastle.

There is an obvious 'grading' to the teams – Man Utd tend to play a better game than, say, Southampton, and Arsenal are still dull and tedious but there's not much else going on.

Are we being unduly harsh? No. *Actua Soccer* is a fine game. Some people will think it's the best PlayStation footie game while others – and we're included in this group – think that *ISS Pro*, especially, is better. If you are a die-hard fan of *Actua*, then stick with it because this version hasn't been significantly improved to warrant purchasing. If you've never played *Actua*, however, hopefully it'll be re-released in the not-too-distant future at the bargain price of £19.99, although this had yet to be confirmed by Gremlin at the time of going to press.



Alternatively...

ISS Pro	9/10	PSM19
Actua Soccer	9/10	PSM3
ISS Deluxe	8/10	PSM15
Adidas Power Soccer	8/10	PSM17
APS International	8/10	PSM18
Goal Storm	8/10	PSM2
Actua Soccer Club Edition	7/10	PSM20
FIFA Soccer '97	7/10	PSM15

VERDICT

■ GRAPHICS:	Smooth-moving 7	■ GAMEPLAY:	Good but not the greatest 7
■ SOUND:	Commentary from the best 8	■ PRESENTATION:	Definitely average 5
■ LIFESPAN:	A long season ahead 7	■ ORIGINALITY:	None at all 3

At its core, *Club Edition is* still a splendid game but it has been bettered. Not worth a look-in if you've got the first game, *Actua Soccer*, either.

7 out of 10

Some magazines are worth remembering...

Essential PlayStation

Part Three

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Essential PlayStation

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DUNGEON KEEPER

Dungeon Keeper is finished! Read the world exclusive review of Molyneux's farewell masterpiece only in PC GAMER. Then turn the page and be the first to discover what the man's up to next...

PC GAMER

On sale Wednesday 21 May

■ PUBLISHER:	BMG	■ DEVELOPER:	Boss Studios
■ RELEASE DATE:	May	■ ORIGIN:	United States
■ PRICE:	£39.99	■ STYLE:	Platform game

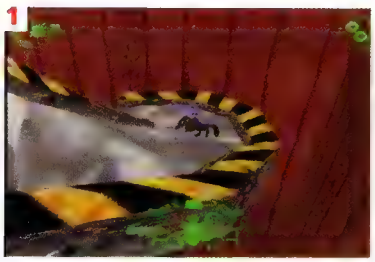
One Player

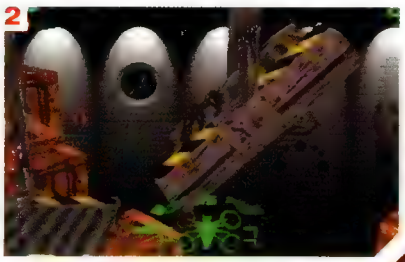
Memory card Compatible

PlayTest

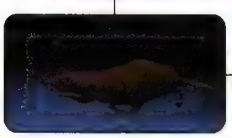
Spider

Come crawl the web in BMG's spidery spectacular. It's full of the old tried-and-tested tricks but 'horribly playable'





(1) Spidey goes sliding down a conveyor, collecting power points all the way. (2) More 'spider on a conveyor belt' action. (3) One of the game's many timing problems. When this raises up, leg it (geddit?).

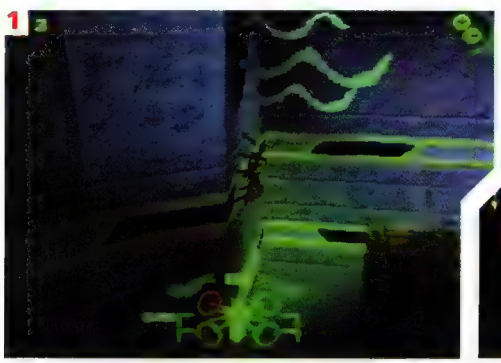


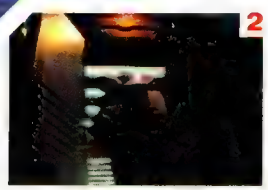
Find this critter in your bath, though, and you'd be best advised just to leave the house, before it gets the chance to fire missiles at you. Or poisoned gas, or a boomerang, or one of another half a dozen assorted weapons. Not that this is a shoot 'em up. *Spider* is a simple 3D platform game. But with a big difference – it's spookily playable and eerily creepy. Twenty four levels of platforming action see you in charge of the eight-legged terror (seven really, because one's been replaced with a kind of mini-sword which is your basic weapon for killing the baddies that populate the levels) as you attempt to, well, finish the game.

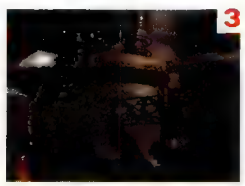
Along your way you're going to be picking up little energy parcels (get 100 and win an extra life), bonus hit tokens (you can only take two hits before you die) and extra weapons (as mentioned before) **which are all going to help in your fight against the rats, hornets and other spiders.** As with most platformers these days, several routes will take you to the end point, the longest route being the one that's got the most bonuses and most enemies to fight.

Controlling Spidey is a joy. Left to go left, Up to go up when you're on the side of something, and Down to go down. There's also a neat little feature which allows you to hang upside-down from a thread and swing yourself backwards and forwards to avoid enemies and collect bonuses. Just as much attention has been paid to the difficulty tuning too. The first few levels are short and easy and the later ones long and tough – timing problems become more frequent, the baddies more ferocious and re-start points few and far between.

Spider has everything going for it apart from a spark of originality. It's just a 3D platformer. Horribly playable, but ultimately limited and 'samey'. As your frustration level rises, so the enjoyment plummets. Not an instant classic, then, but certainly one of the more enjoyable platformers around and it's great to see a game that has both a memory card and password save feature. Nice one, BMG.







(1) Believe it or not, air vents with ribbons on them kill spiders. (2, 3) The story unravels with some rather lovely between stage cut scenes.

Alternatively...

Crash Bandicoot	9/10	*PSM10*
Pandemonium	9/10	*PSM14*
Spider	7/10	*PSM20*

VERDICT

■ GRAPHICS:	Just above average 6	■ GAMEPLAY:	Splendid, splendid controls 8
■ SOUND:	One of the weaker areas 4	■ PRESENTATION:	Nothing remarkable 8
■ LIFESPAN:	Watch the frustration soar 6	■ ORIGINALITY:	Sadly not much at all 8

The wonderful controls and novel main character mask the game's simple platform roots. Not the greatest example of its genre but certainly an enjoyable distraction.

7 out of 10

Two Players | Memory card Compatible

■ PUBLISHER:	T-HQ	■ DEVELOPER:	Kokopeli Digital Studios
■ RELEASE DATE:	May	■ ORIGIN:	United States
■ PRICE:	£39.99	■ STYLE:	Wrestling sim

WCW Vs The World

World Championship Wrestling is the World Wrestling Federation's poor relation but it still lends its name to yet another PlayStation wrestling game

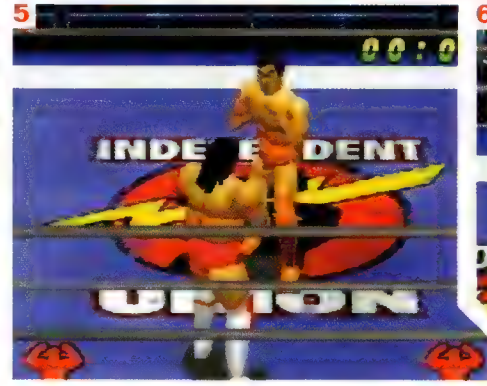
Long gone are the halcyon days of Ken Walton on a Saturday afternoon informing us, with all seriousness apparently, that the pantomime on the TV screen was some kind of competitive sport. Despite the odd mad granny, nobody was buying it, though, and TV wrestling died in the UK. Perhaps not surprisingly, the Americans love it.

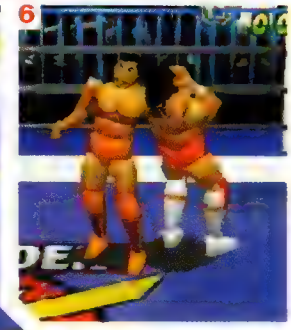
They've even made film stars of the 'sport's' biggest stars (all that acting was bound to pay dividends) and possibly the biggest star of the lot, Hulk Hogan, appears in this game.

Grapple fans will be pleased to learn that there are some 60 wrestlers featured in *WCW Vs The World*, each with their own special 'signature' moves. Who could forget Hulk's Python, Hollywood Slam and Leg Drop? Apart from the very basic moves (punch and kick) everything is context-sensitive. Press the Triangle button in one situation and you're going to deliver a piledriver to your opponent, and in another you're going to smother them in an attempt to pin them down for the famous 'Oneeea, twoooa, threeeah!' count.

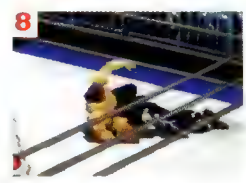
Despite this being a fighting game, it's not a frantic button-basher most of the time. Timing your attacks and blocks is all-important and *WCW* favours the 'once you've pulled off a move you must sit back while the game goes through the pre-set sequence of animations' style of gameplay. This it does successfully, to its credit.

What it doesn't manage to do very well is inspire the player. In one-player mode you'll find the opponents challenging enough, but in two-player the pace is a little sedate. That doesn't mean to say it's necessarily bad, there's just nothing to grab you (sorry). Despite the rather groovy camera angles and the satisfying moves (usually against your character), the game falls flat on the canvas most of the time and there's little to inspire you to get up again.





(1) About to be thrown to the canvas. (2) And again. (3) And again. (4) A slap in the face will see him off. (5, 6) The chap in red trunks launches into a special move. (7) The one and only Hulk Hogan in action. (8) Hulk receives a leg-drop of his own. (9) Both combatants have a little breather. (10) Hulk's floored his opponent and is about to pick him up, hold him over his head and throw him to the canvas. You see a lot of this move in *WCW*.



Alternatively...

WWF Wrestlemania	8/10	PSM2
WWF: In Your House	5/10	PSM15
WCW Vs The World	6/10	PSM20

VERDICT

■ GRAPHICS:	Glitchy but good 7	■ GAMEPLAY:	Too slow, too fiddly 4
■ SOUND:	Bad crowd chatter 2	■ PRESENTATION:	Definitely average 5
■ LIFESPAN:	Long. Probably 7	■ ORIGINALITY:	Nothing revolutionary 3

Unless you're a big fan of the sport, you'll find the gameplay too flat to get worked up about. Not the best in a narrow field of competitors.

6 out of 10

backissues

Every month the *Official UK PlayStation Magazine* covers the **world of PlayStation software** – in words and pictures and on our **exclusive demo disc.** Don't miss an issue! **Order now!**

10

CD 10: Porsche Challenge, Supersonic Racers, Gremlin arena (playable demos), Olympic Soccer (rolling demo)

11

CD 11: Tekken 2, Fade To Black (playable demos), V-Rally (graphics demo), Pro Pinball interactive competition

12

CD 12: F1, Crash Bandicoot, Die Hard Trilogy, Supersonic Racers (playable demo), Broken Sword (rolling demo)

13

CD 13: Wipeout XL, Formula One, Monster Trucks (playable demos), Destruction Derby 2 (rolling demo)

14

CD 14: Touring Cars, Micro Machines 3D, Porsche Challenge (rolling demo), Time Commando, Actua Golf, Lemmings, Rival Realms (playable)

15

CD 15: Porsche Challenge, Tomb Raider, Extended, Pandemonium, Adventures of Lomax (all playable)

16

CD 16: Warhammer, Victory Boxing, Obsidian Soccer, Discworld (all playable demos)

17

CD 17: Destruction Derby 2, Sentinel, Broken Sword, Tunnel B1 (all playable demos)

01

CD 18: Command & Conquer, Robotnik X, Track 11, Adidas Power Soccer Intl (playable), Cool Boarders (rolling)

02

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Super Puzzle Fighter II Turbo

These puzzle games are all so similar – do we really need another one? We'd say there's a strong case for it, as we look at what is arguably the best puzzle game ever written

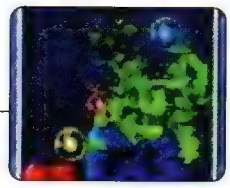
(1) *SPFII Turbo* is more complex than many puzzle games, so you'll probably want to try out the splendid training mode. (2) It's possible to earn the right to view the intermissions when you want. (3) Victory is mine, as expected. (4) Another shot of the training mode. (5) And another. (6) Ryu unleashes a frightening blow.

PlayStation Magazine STARPLAYER

There's probably a little plaque on the wall at the Capcom offices which reads simply: 'You have to be mad to work here'. While we're all fully aware of the odd nature of many a Japanese title, this one takes oddness to a whole new level. From its rather too long title, right down to its puzzle-game-of-the-beat-'em-up gameplay, it's an odd fish, but thankfully one that delivers arguably the best puzzling action you've ever experienced.

The *Puzzle Fighter* world is taken straight from the *Street Fighter* series with a range of familiar and not-so-familiar combatants. Chun-Li, Ryu, Ken, Sakura, Hsien Ko, Dan, Akuma, Morrigan, and a sprinkling of hidden characters, are all in there for the playing. And far from being there purely in the interests of visual variety, each has a different style of play.

The gameplay is, as you might expect, yet another variation on the *Puyo-Puyo/Mean Bean Machine* theme. Pairs of gems fall down the player's board and he or she has to rotate and place them so that like colours are grouped together. *Puzzle Fighter*, though, requires a little more strategy than most. **Grouping many gems together produces power gems. When a circular gem appears, you can use it to destroy all the touching gems of that colour.** Now, destroying gems send a number of counter gems over to the opponent's board. These cannot be destroyed until they've counted down from five to zero, at which point they turn into normal gems.



But that's not all. Power gems send more counter gems over than single gems, and on top of this, tall pillars of gems also send over multiple counter gems. What's more, each character sends over a different pattern of counter gems, so each requires a different style of play. And, of course, as is usually the case with these games, if you can set off chain reactions, your attack is even bigger. A neat touch is that if you're about to get an almighty pasting, you can quickly set off a counter attack and your opponent's attack is negated. Then there are the crystals which destroy all the gems of a particular colour across the entire board. This might sound a bit too powerful, but crystals produce

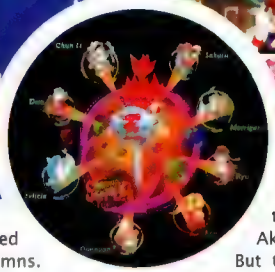
It oozes character, generates masses of excitement and contains enough subtleties of strategic gameplay to keep it fresh every time you play

■ PUBLISHER:	Virgin	■ DEVELOPER:	Capcom
■ RELEASE DATE:	Out now	■ ORIGIN:	Japan
■ PRICE:	£39.99	■ STYLE:	Puzzle game

Two Players

Memory card Compatible

(1) You get to fight Akuma once you've defeated all of the other characters. (2) A knockout, and rather a spectacular one at that. (3) The girls are pretty hard in this game. We wouldn't want to date any of them. (4) Akuma is a tough character to beat. He drops counter gems in odd patterns.



far less powerful attacks than those created properly with power gems and large columns.

It probably sounds a bit confusing if you haven't played it, but take it from us, all these subtleties of gameplay and tactical elements make for a hugely satisfying puzzler that just keep improving, the more you play it. Plus **you have all the different characters to master – a feature that gives it huge amounts of replay value and which also manages to capture some of the magic of the more familiar *Street Fighter* combat games.**

As a two-player game, *Puzzle Fighter* is pretty much unbeatable, but the good news is there's a decent amount of single-player fun to be had too. Arcade mode simply pits you against the other fighters in a tournament, one after the other, at the end of which you get to play against Akuma and Devilot, the hidden characters. But there's also Street Puzzle mode. In this option, after choosing your character, you also choose a sort of mystery prize. If you're victorious, you get to see your prize. The treats on offer are very strange, but getting them is curiously satisfying. For example, one reward might be that you can view all the special interlude animations that crop up throughout the game, or you might get to hear a special song.

There's a heap of stuff in *Puzzle Fighter*, and to relate it all in a review of this size would be impossible, so it's probably best to just emphasise the fact that this is one of the most enjoyable puzzlers ever to appear on any

Our favourite young things

Here's a selection of the characters. There are eight in total, plus three bonus ones. Each one drops counter gems in a different way, so each requires a very different approach. For example, Dan drops all red gems. While this means you can counter attack and slaughter him, he tends to first build up an attack of such magnitude that you can't retaliate effectively.

Alternatively...

Super Puzzle Fighter II	9/10	PSM20
Bust A Move 2	9/10	PSM8

VERDICT

■ GRAPHICS:	Top-notch 8	■ GAMEPLAY:	The best 9
■ SOUND:	Mad. AIEEE! 8	■ PRESENTATION:	Some great scenes 9
■ LIFESPAN:	Loads of characters 8	■ ORIGINALITY:	In places 7

You can argue among yourselves, but for this reviewer, *Puzzle Fighter* is the absolute pinnacle of puzzling. Hard to find fault with any part of it, really.

9 out of 10

PlayStation owners have never had it so good.

Inside E46:

Metal Gear

Rascal

Psybadek

F1 97

Colony Wars

Overboard

Gex 2

Blasto

Tobal 2

Crash Bandicoot 2

Plus, issue 46 is accompanied by an exclusive supplement examining Bullfrog and *Populous 3*. On the eve of Peter Molyneux's departure Edge reveals what lies in store for one of the most innovative developers of the past decade.

EDGE®

issue 46 on sale May 29

Image from Konami's *Metal Gear*

■ PUBLISHER:	Electronic Arts	■ DEVELOPER:	In-house
■ RELEASE DATE:	Out now	■ ORIGIN:	United States
■ PRICE:	£44.99	■ STYLE:	Racing game

One Player

Memory card Compatible

Need For Speed 2

We got to thinking, what would it be like if Jeremy Clarkson reviewed racing games instead of real cars?

[1] The exciting introduction features real cars. [2, 3, 4, 5] But after that it all goes a bit downhill. The graphics are lush and rich, but it all happens too slowly and there's no great sense of control.

[Camera zooms in to a famous hair-do, staring intently at a TV screen. It turns around. It is Jeremy.]

'What a dog. Not the beautiful lady I'm seeing at the moment, of course, but this latest little number from EA. Climb in, fire her up, and you'll be pleasantly surprised by the throaty roar she barks back at you. But as soon as you take her off round the track, you're in for a bit of a shock.

'She doesn't lack grunt, or even bottom – stuff your foot down on her pedal and she'll respond all right – but as soon as you try to tame her, you'll get a rather different response. She'll wobble, she'll roll, and if you tap her stop button she'll go into a four-day slide you'll never recover from. Taking a corner with this naughty little girl is like shoving your head in a lion's gob. Not for the faint-hearted.

'She looks attractive enough. Her six courses are dotted with some glorious scenery of the kind that just shouts out, 'TAKE ME FOR A RIDE!' She also offers you the choice of eight of today's greatest road-racing machines to take out and slap around – there's even a rather dinky promotional video to go with each one. But in this day and age it's not enough to have the curves of a page-three stunner – you have to deliver the goods as well.

'And it's in the goods-delivery department that *NFS2* is desperately looking for staff. Things haven't got off to a good start by the initial course. Designed to be an easy ride, it soon gets boring, as frankly easy rides usually do. As you progress, the courses get trickier until they're frankly too bloody tricky and you want to find the monkey that designed them, get hold of him, and squeeze his kahuna until his eyes bulge.

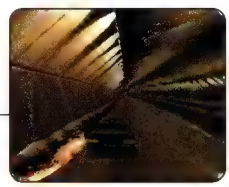
'The problems don't stop there, either. Aside from the atrocious handling I covered earlier, there're a wealth of little details that don't quite add up. **Off the top of my head, I'm thinking about the sparks that fly off the walls when you scrape against them – even if they're wooden fences or sandy banks.**

'*NFS2* doesn't even have the class of her older sister – the original *Need For Speed* managed to rack up a respectable 8 points for being immense fun. Christ, *NFS2* doesn't even let you play with a friend – this is strictly a solo affair. She may look like a better bet, but she doesn't turn out to be as much of a goer.'

[1, 2] Some of the tracks are a wee bit over-complicated, like these Mystic Peaks situated somewhere in Japan.

Alternatively...

Ridge Racer	8/10	*PSM1*
Formula 1	8/10	*PSM11*
Porsche Challenge	8/10	*PSM10*
Need For Speed	8/10	*PSM5*
Need For Speed 2	5/10	*PSM20*
Penny Racers	5/10	*PSM14*



VERDICT

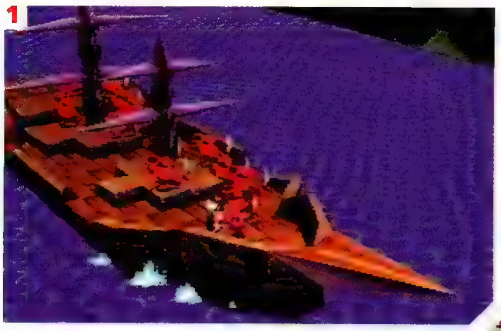
■ GRAPHICS:	A stunner 7	■ GAMEPLAY:	A bitch 3
■ SOUND:	Everywhere 6	■ PRESENTATION:	Tidy 4
■ LIFESPAN:	You'll get tired 4	■ ORIGINALITY:	A Lada 8

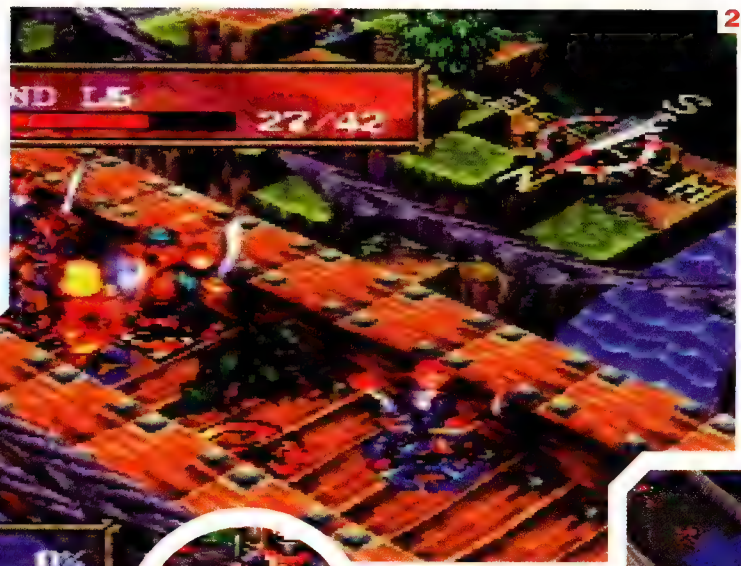
Grunt, bark and woof aplenty, but this little doggy needs to be put on a much longer lead before she's a candidate for the park.

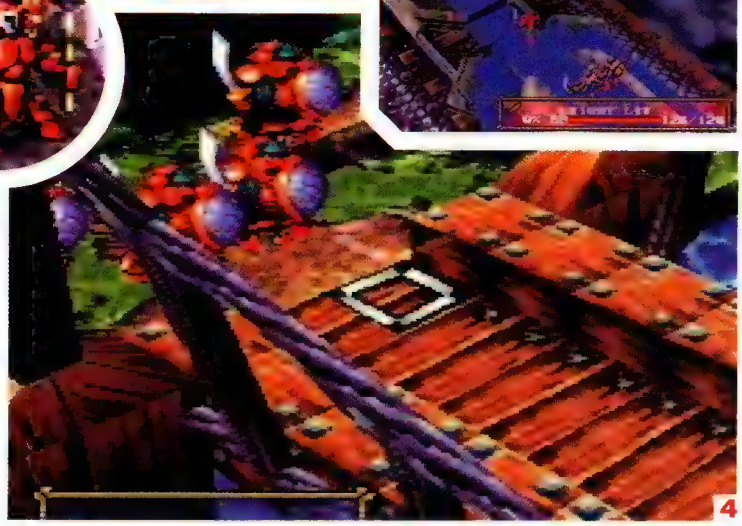
5 out of 10

Vandal-Hearts

For those of you who can't wait for *Final Fantasy VII*, here's a fantastical and quirky Japanese offering that combines well-worn gameplay with an amazing script







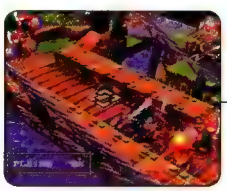
(1) With drums beating furiously, the scourge of the high seas approaches. (2) Your happy band of adventurers fights across a bridge. That's Diego with the bow and arrow – he's a cheeky chappy. (3) The blue area shows how far your character can move. (4) Ugly brigands, just waiting for a good smacking. (5) At the end of every fight the gold earned is totted up, with minuses for fallen comrades.

PlayStation Magazine STARPLAYER

If you're like most of the staff at the *Official UK PlayStation mag* – male, that is – there will have been a time in your life when you used to play with toy soldiers. You might have had a fort to go with them, or maybe you made up your own terrain; shoeboxes for hills, jumpers for goalposts – you know what we're talking about.

If you think back to those days, you'll probably remember making up little stories to go with the tableaux you set up, and the happy hours you spent imagining that you were commander of the forces, trying to storm the fort and free the captured comrades held inside.

Well – strange as it may seem – that's exactly what *Vandal-Hearts* is like. Except about a thousand times better. The meat of this game consists of a series of small-scale battles (about 20 to 30 characters involved in each) that are rendered on to your television in wonderful 3D by your little grey friend. And it's just like playing soldiers when you were small. **There are fortresses to storm, bridges to fight your way across, prisons to fight your way out off**, evil despots to confront on the steps of their palaces, fights on trains and a wealth of other scenarios.



In each of these battles you take it in turns with the computer to move your characters, fire bows, cast spells and, well, hit things. Usually the last one standing

The battles are very well-designed – always a challenge but never too difficult, they keep the adventure moving along at a nice brisk pace

■ PUBLISHER:	Konami	■ DEVELOPER:	In-house
■ RELEASE DATE:	May	■ ORIGIN:	Japan
■ PRICE:	£44.99	■ STYLE:	Wargame

One Player

Memory card Compatible

[1] A bat gets a large rock kicked in his face as Kira makes her dramatic entrance. [2] Any money earned is quickly spent on upgrading weapons. [3] If Ash dies, you have to start the level again. [4] Terrain has quite an effect on gameplay. [5] Kira again. This time she's about to kick the rock. [6] Ash and Eleni. As the game progresses, they fall in love. Yeuch, eh guys? [7] Nasty, big ants. [8] You tell him, Ash. [9] Ash gets stuck into one of the Crimson Guard.

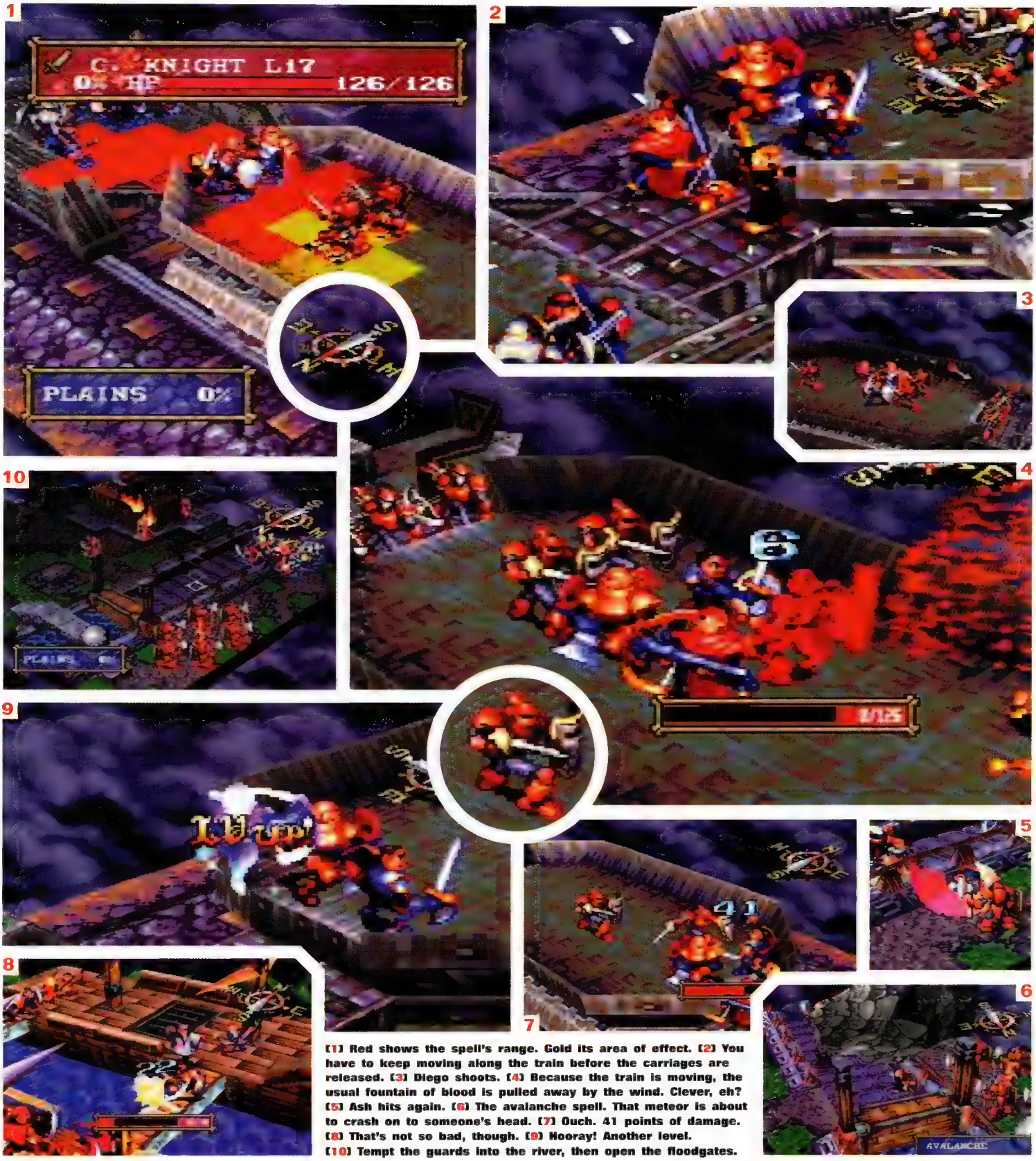
is the winner. These battles are very well-designed; always a challenge, but never too difficult, they keep the adventure moving along at a nice, brisk pace.

All this action is tied together by a strong plot. Drawing freely on classic fantasy stories, Japanese cinema techniques and – yes! – even Shakespeare, **_Vandal-Hearts_ is one of the most satisfyingly scripted games we've ever had the pleasure of experiencing.** For those of you who remember the fabulous television series first screened in the '70s, it's like a whole series of episodes of *The Water Margin* strung together. You play the part of Ash Lambert. Initially a commander of a small security force, as you travel the mystical land of Ishtaria, you find companions to help you along the way and end up as the main figure in a massive rebellion. At the start of the game you control three characters; by the end, your band of warriors consists of twelve. It would be churlish to give away too much of the plot, but it's enough to tell you that you'll be smiling as characters fall in love, frowning as you're betrayed by those you thought trustworthy, scowling at your bitter enemies and weeping (well, almost) as friends pass away into eternity. In fact *Vandal-Hearts* is so well written that it's even pretentious enough to have a strong theme of responsibility and – deep breath – redemption-through-sacrifice running through it: pretty heavy stuff for a computer game.

What is at heart a fairly old-fashioned style of game... is transformed by the strength of the plot and the superb level of detail imparted to it

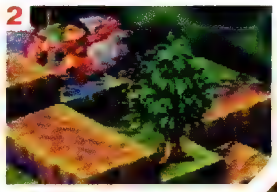
But it's precisely this that makes *Vandal-Hearts* so satisfying to play. What is, at heart, a fairly old-fashioned style of game (not, incidentally, a role-playing game) which will be familiar to anyone who's played any of the *X-COM* series, or who came across its earlier incarnation, *Laser Squad*, is transformed by the strength of the plot and the superb level of detail that's been imparted to it by the designers.

The tired-old format of endless battles is transformed by the clever use of victory conditions. Normally, you'll have to make sure that Ash survives the battle and that all your enemies are defeated in order to win, but several of the levels have a very different feel to them. In the battle that we've shown large on one of these pages, you have to fight your way across a bridge. ▶



[1] Red shows the spell's range. Gold its area of effect. [2] You have to keep moving along the train before the carriages are released. [3] Diego shoots. [4] Because the train is moving, the usual fountain of blood is pulled away by the wind. Clever, eh? [5] Ash hits again. [6] The avalanche spell. That meteor is about to crash on to someone's head. [7] Ouch. 41 points of damage. [8] That's not so bad, though. [9] Hooray! Another level. [10] Tempt the guards into the river, then open the floodgates.

Vandal-Hearts



[1] You what, mate? Dolf waxes lyrical. [2] The lovely archer Kira. And a tree [3] The game is divided into chapters, each of which has a map. As you progress through the battles, new areas become available on the map. [4] Now, Diego... That's just plain rude. Especially when we need his help.

▶ Unfortunately, the bridge is collapsing behind you, and every turn some more of it disappears, so you have to keep moving forward quickly. In another battle, one of your companions is strapped to a platform that's descending into a lava pit and you have only eight turns to find out how to stop the platform from going down. Another battle still pits you against vastly superior forces, and you simply have to reach the edge of the screen before Ash is killed.

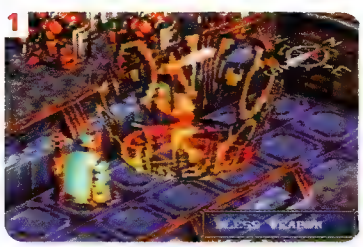
Adding another level to these shenanigans is the role-playing element that the game *does* possess. As your characters fight their way through the story, they accumulate experience points which make them increasingly more powerful. Each character also has a choice of character paths to make every 10 levels (for instance, a healer can choose to become either a monk or a bishop when he reaches the tenth level; Monks are good fighters with some spells and Bishops are great healers who aren't so good in combat). Each battle also ends with the accumulation of gold which can be spent on upgrading weapons and armour – but only if you can find a shop!

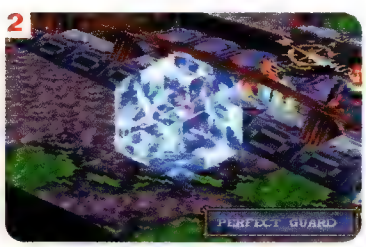
And finally it's worth mentioning the graphics. While initially they may seem a little disappointing, you soon become very comfortable with the cartoon characters. Each of them has their own unique animations that give them a huge amount of personality. The terrains on which you fight are wonderfully realised, and there are some genuinely great set-pieces – such as the first time you cast the Salamander spell and a huge, fiery dragon whirls around the screen, turning everything blood-red. An outstanding title.

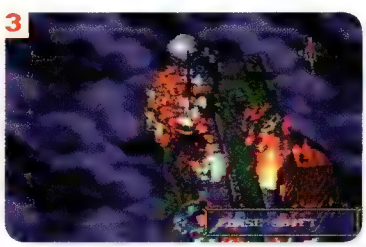
Alternatively...

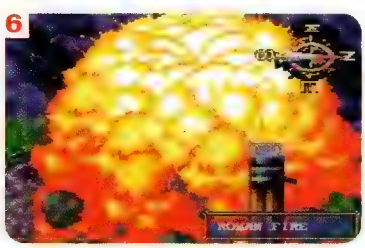
Vandal-Hearts	9/10	*PSM20*
X-COM: Enemy Unknown	8/10	*PSM1*
X-COM: TFTD	8/10	*PSM14*
Warhammer	8/10	*PSM12*

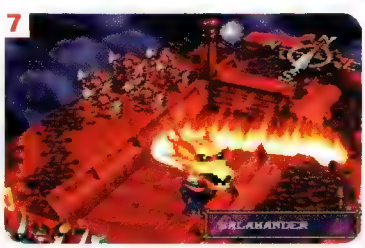
Now that's magic!

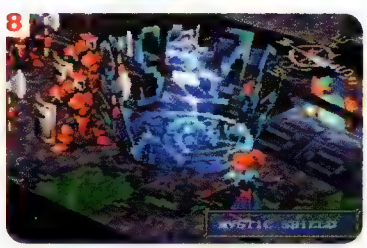












The spells in *Vandal-Hearts* are fabulous. Seeing them sitting still doesn't really do them justice. [1] Bless Weapon shoves up your attack capabilities. [2] Perfect Guard is a defensive spell. [3] Phase Shift makes the whole screen contort. [4] Holy Pressure squeezes the baddies. [5] Rolling Fire hurts a lot. [6] But Roman Fire affects a bigger area. [7] Salamander is the best spell. Maximum damage to loads of enemies. [8] Mystic Shield is another defence spell.

VERDICT

Official UK PlayStation Magazine 20

■ GRAPHICS:	Brilliant effects 8	■ GAMEPLAY:	Outstanding 10
■ SOUND:	The clamour of battle 8	■ PRESENTATION:	Sublime 10
■ LIFESPAN:	Five solid days 8	■ ORIGINALITY:	Who cares? 7

Vandal-Hearts is a superb game – a careful blend of rivetting storyline, cutsie animation and devastating gameplay. Wholly recommended.

9 out of 10

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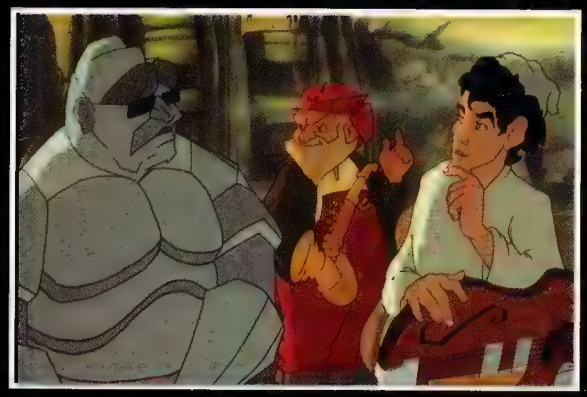

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GAMESMASTER

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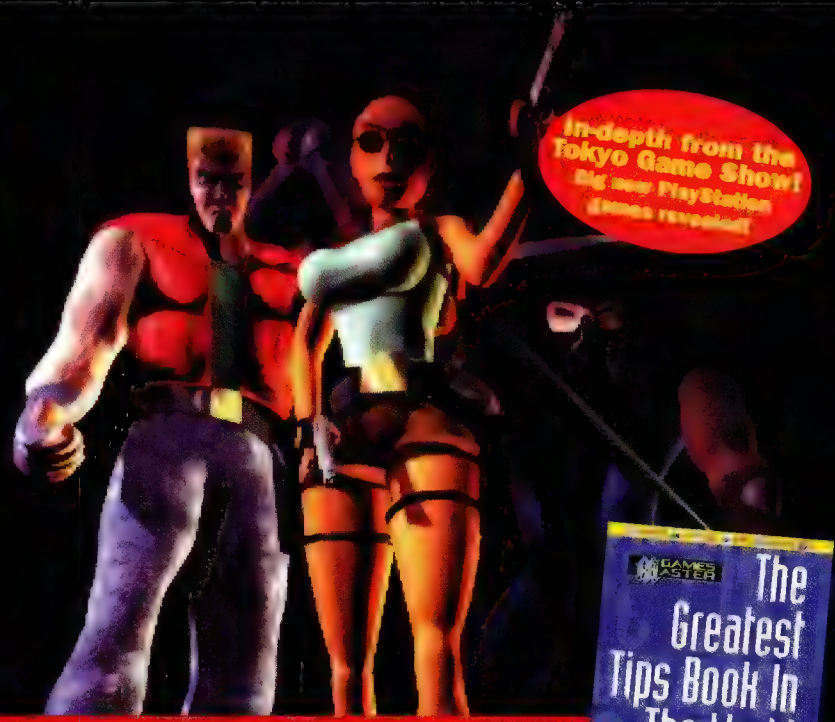
- **TOMB RAIDER 2**
- **NINJA**
- **FIGHTING FORCE**

Read this month's GamesMaster if you want to go exclusively behind the scenes at Derby's Core Design. It really is that simple.



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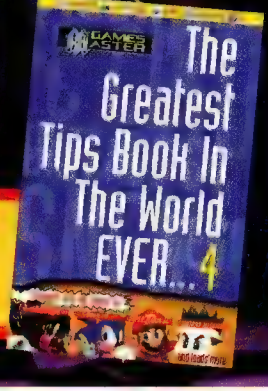


Issue 56 – Out Wednesday 14th May

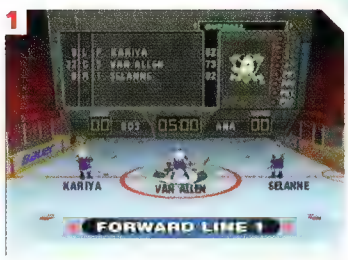
■ PUBLISHER:	Virgin Inc	■ DEVELOPER:	Radical
■ RELEASE DATE:	TBC	■ ORIGIN:	United States
■ PRICE:	TBC	■ STYLE:	Sports sim

Two Players

Memory card Compatible

NHL Powerplay Hockey '96

Virgin make a commendable attempt at toppling the mighty Electronic Arts with this slickly-played hockey extravaganza



(1) You can fiddle about with the team line-up at any point. (2) Whenever a goal's scored, the players have a bit of a celebration. (3) Change the camera angle in Replay mode. (4) *Powerplay* offers the usual range of options. No more, no less.

It's often hard to review a new sports sim without a hint of apathy, especially when you're not a fan of a certain type of game. People who aren't into hockey games, for example, might well look at a new one and think, 'What's the point, when I've already got the highly competent *NHL '97*?'. But, of course, there are gamers who will willingly buy every hockey, football or golf game, no matter how similar they all are.

If you're one of these *aficionados* of sports games, *NHL Powerplay Hockey* '96 is a pretty tidy alternative to EAs' much-respected hockey title. But let's get the negative criticism out of the way first.

There are four main gripes. First off, *Powerplay* plays a little slowly. **It's certainly speedy enough to generate a decent amount of excitement, and is never sluggish enough to frustrate**, but if you're a regular player of EAs' offering, the difference will be noticeable. Secondly, even though the camera angle used in the game covers plenty of the rink and moves around intelligently, there's no option to select alternative camera angles or adjust it. It's no big deal, it's just that we've come to expect a choice. Also, as far as we can tell, the game doesn't automatically select the player nearest the puck, or if it does, it certainly doesn't do it very well, which means you end up constantly having to select the desired player manually. And finally, call us picky, but it's 1997 – so what's with this '96 business? Otherwise *Powerplay* is pleasingly slick. All the NHL teams are included, as well as a number of international sides, which means that you can choose one-off games, seasons and tournaments, as well as an extra World Tournament mode.

As soon as you begin a match, the game's major strength becomes immediately apparent – accessibility. **It might be partially due to the speed and almost certainly due to the controls, but *Powerplay* is great for the novice hockey player.** Even without the merest glance at the instruction manual, you're away and playing like a seasoned pro, not necessarily winning, but certainly getting a damned good game out of the thing. The players are responsive and the intelligently placed pass, slapshot and bodycheck buttons make it child's play to start scoring goals. All of which might cause you to overlook the fact the graphics are actually very smart, with nicely detailed and well-animated players skating convincingly around the smoothly-scrolling rink.

If we haven't mentioned the full range of options available, it's because there's nothing more or less than you would expect from a game of this sort. All the teams are there, and you can play full seasons and tournaments and save them on to memory card. EAs' *NHL '97* is still top dog, but anyone who gives *NHL Powerplay Hockey '96* a whirl will come out of the experience thoroughly satisfied.

Alternatively...

NHL '97	8/10	*PSM13*
NHL Powerplay Hockey '96	7/10	*PSM20*
NHL Face Off	7/10	*PSM8*

VERDICT

■ GRAPHICS:	Deceptively good 8	■ GAMEPLAY:	Very good, not great 7
■ SOUND:	The usual stuff 7	■ PRESENTATION:	Very smooth 8
■ LIFESPAN:	Limitless two-player fun 9	■ ORIGINALITY:	Not really 2

A sprinkling of faults and omissions, but all in all *NHL PH '96* is solidly built and gives the player a thoroughly entertaining time of it – and a good-looking one at that.

7 out of 10

Official UK PlayStation Magazine 20

Allied General

In the age of *Command & Conquer*, is there really a place in the market for a hexagon-based wargame, or should it be bombed out of existence?

War games are a strange old thing, aren't they? As soon as people start playing them, they suddenly think they're Alexander the Great or Napoleon Bonapart. Unfortunately they nearly always end up getting all their soldiers massacred and bases destroyed, but at least they had fun in the process.

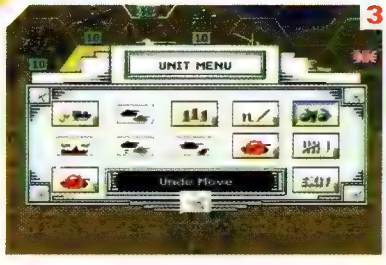
Allied General is the sequel to last year's *Panzer General*. It's the sort of game that always finds immense popularity in the States but is rather less successful over here. No matter. **The game opens with a few minutes of historical footage, explaining the background to the campaign**. The year is 1940, and the Axis powers of Germany, Italy and Japan are trying to break the Allies' resolve by forcing another Front in the Middle East, so threatening the West's oil supply. There are a few more Pathe news-style movies, showing you the importance of your role, then it's time to take control of your troops.

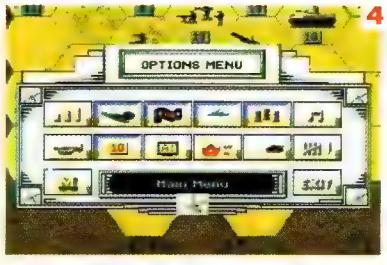
There's a comprehensive array of options, ranging from the number of players to the range of scenarios. And as well as the usual difficulty settings, it's possible to customise the strength of your opponents by deciding their prestige and experience. One nice touch is the enhanced AI option – turn this on, and it increases the tendency for your computer opponent to retreat or send for replacements instead of just steadfastly fighting until the end.

(1) Fighting with welding goggles. Never a good idea. (2) The, ahem, action scenes. (3) The scene is set with some nice Pathe news footage.

The strategy element is great and the gameplay itself is adequate – if you're wanting an [illegible] **8-bit gaming experience.**

It's when it comes to battling the enemy that things start to go wrong. While it's probable that older readers will have played these traditional-style war games,



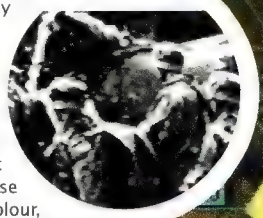


(1) The battle scenes wouldn't look out of place on an Amiga. (2) He's behind you. (3, 4) Both sets of option screens are functional and comprehensive but using them proves very annoying and tedious.

Two Players

■ PUBLISHER:	Mindscape	■ DEVELOPER:	SSI
■ RELEASE DATE:	Out now	■ ORIGIN:	United States
■ PRICE:	£39.99	■ STYLE:	Strategy wargame

hexagon-based gaming will come as a bit of a shock to PlayStation newcomers who have been brought up on the likes of *Command & Conquer* and *Warhammer*. Gone are the nice little infantry men, flame-throwing tanks and recon bikes, only to be replaced by awful 2D pictures of planes and tanks. The graphics in this game are dire – at best they could be described as functional.



Allied General is guilty of a lot of problems but the main gripe has to be the interface. **To call it clumsy is like calling the Eiffel Tower 'quite tall' or London 'quite dirty'.** The game's poor design is especially apparent when you see the in-game menus, which use a similar cursor colour to the background colour, making it very difficult to tell what you are doing.

Any reader of this review could be forgiven for thinking we really hated the game but they'd be wrong. The strategy element is great and the gameplay itself is adequate – if you're wanting an outdated, 8-bit gaming experience. Surely the PlayStation is not the machine for these types of game any more. Games are about fun, and unfortunately this is lacking in *Allied General*.

When you are deciding which enemy hexagon to attack, the programme tells you what your gains and losses will be. Don't trust it.

Alternatively...

Panzer General	PSM 8/10
Allied General	PSM2 5/10

VERDICT

Official UK PlayStation Magazine 20

■ GRAPHICS:	Far too dated 3	■ GAMEPLAY:	Adequate 7
■ SOUND:	The occasional gunfire 2	■ PRESENTATION:	They tried their best 5
■ LIFESPAN:	Could last years or days 8	■ ORIGINALITY:	Nope 3

If you're into dated, graphically poor war-games then this is just up your street. If not, then don't go near *Allied General* with the proverbial barge pole.

5 out of 10

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Transport Tycoon

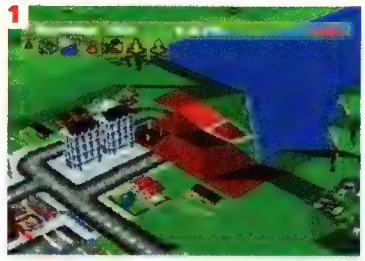
Reasonably fresh from its slightly-muted PC success, MicroProse's in-depth business sim on four wheels, a wing and a hull, makes its PlayStation debut. Let's have a big round...

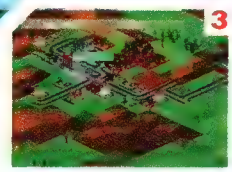
What seems like a great idea doesn't always work out that way. Take *Transport Tycoon*, for example. You can picture the scene at an excited MicroProse office in the early '90s. Smart, probably pony-tailed, young Californian executive is explaining his new concept to the board: 'It's simple, man. We just take *Railroad Tycoon*, possibly Sid Meier's greatest ever game (at the mention of the name, the board members all start making we-are-not-worthy bows) and, like, update it. Cool, huh? **We'll add trucks and buses and aircraft and ships to the trains, make the terrain all 3D and groovy** and make it EVEN MORE COMPLICATED, 'cause that's – y'know – what the kids love, right?'

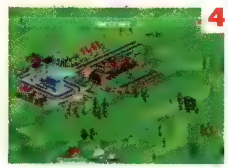
Well, he was nearly right. *Transport Tycoon* is a game with lots to recommend it. Not least the fact that you control a huge and diverse transport operation that includes, well, trains, buses, trucks, aircraft and ships. Starting in 1930 on a randomly-generated 3D terrain, your mission is to build and operate – at a profit, of course – a transport network. You can build stations and airports, roads and railtracks and link towns and businesses to each other. That all costs money of course, but to compensate – as in the real world – people are forced to pay you an extortionate amount of money for the privilege of travelling from one place to another.

This is probably one of the most complete and impressive business sims ever seen... but, dare we say, it's a wee bit boring

(1) You don't get much more *Postman Pat* than this. (2) At close range you can swivel the view around. (3) Stats are available for everything.



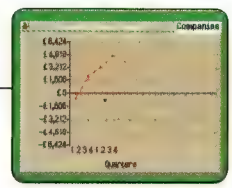




(1, 2) Before building docks, you have to lower the land. (3) A town. (4) An aeroplane in trouble.

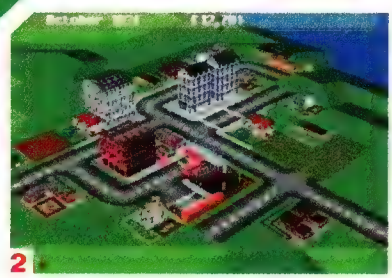
Thus you attempt to make more money than you spend – hey! the secret of capitalism – and increase your network, devastating more countryside in the process.

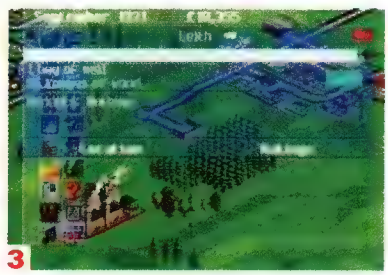
To make the game more of a challenge, there are computer-controlled opponents who – having given you a bit of a head-start – soon pick up the gauntlet of proving who's the biggest and baddest transport manager of them all. And that's about it. As the years roll by, better vehicles finally become available as your old ones break down. Your towns grow (or shrink, if you're being inept). And what was once a green and pleasant valley starts to look like Clapham Junction (Europe's busiest railway junction, apparently).



As you'd expect in a modern management sim, **there are charts and graphs galore to peruse, as well as customisable options to make the game as easy or as cut-throat as you like.** In fact this is probably one of the most complete and impressive business sims ever seen.

All of which doesn't stop it being, dare we say it, a wee bit boring. Now, we don't want to insult any transport managers who may read *PSM*, but we don't imagine that you want to come home after a hard day ordering lorries about and recline in your armchair, plug in your PlayStation and, erm, order lorries about to relax, do you? Well, nor do the rest of us much. Ocean should take a look at the lid of our little grey wonder and read the bit that says, quite clearly, 'PlayStation'. Not, for example, 'BusinessStation'.





One Player | Memory card Compatible | Mouse Compatible

PUBLISHER:	Ocean	DEVELOPER:	MicroProse
RELEASE DATE:	June	ORIGIN:	United States
PRICE:	TBC	STYLE:	Business sim

We know that's a wee bit harsh – **there can be something very satisfying about running a successful business, even in a simulation.** But those games that we *have* really enjoyed usually had something more to them than just a straight business sim. Take *Railroad Tycoon* – there you were pioneering your way across the Old West, battling to be the first to cross the continent. Or how about *Theme Park*? That had a sense of humour and looked at the business world through acid-tinted glasses. Or *Sim City 2000* – that had giant spaceships and riots to contend with. The main problem with *Transport* is that nothing exciting happens. The highlight of your life is when some bus-building company comes up with a new model that takes three more passengers than the old one. Wow.

We also have to point out that this is a 1994 PC game that has been translated to the PlayStation rather poorly. In fact, unless you have a PlayStation mouse, you're not going to enjoy this very much at all. With the standard controller, it's very fiddly to use – so much so that we nearly broke three of them in our frustration. It was only when we plugged in a PlayStation mouse that we started to enjoy ourselves.

And that's something that needs to be stressed. *Transport Tycoon* is an enjoyable game. It's great fun to watch your little buses zip around from town to town ('It's just like *Postman Pat*,' cried one onlooker) and if you can get into a rather too-serious business sim, you'll find yourself challenged by the game. It's just that there are better games and better ways to spend your time and your money. Oh, and it uses up a whole memory card as well.

PlayStation

Alternatively...

Theme Park	8/10	PSM1
AIV Evolution Global	7/10	PSM3
Sim City 2000	7/10	PSM11
Transport Tycoon	8/10	PSM20

(1) Road-building is cheap and easy, but doesn't pay as well as rail or air.
(2) The more raw materials you take to a factory, the more it'll produce.

VERDICT

Official UK PlayStation Magazine 20

GRAPHICS:	PC-ported 7	GAMEPLAY:	Excellent 8
SOUND:	Hideous programmer jazz 5	PRESENTATION:	Needs a mouse 6
LIFESPAN:	Repeat to fade 7	ORIGINALITY:	There are few like it 7

A business sim with plenty of depth and interest, but only if you're that way inclined. Not a game for the *Wipeout 2097* crowd, for example.

6 out of 10

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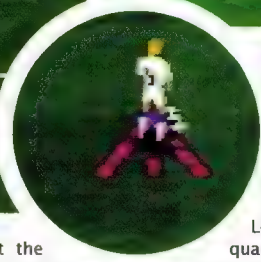
■ PUBLISHER:	Eidos	■ DEVELOPER:	Silicon Dreams
■ RELEASE DATE:	Out now	■ ORIGIN:	UK
■ PRICE:	£44.99	■ STYLE:	Soccer sim

PlayTest

Soccer '97

Remember *Olympic Soccer*? Well, it's back with a new name, new teams and er... erm... well it's back, anyway...



(1) The graphics are still terribly shoddy when compared with the competition. (2) But the sparse polygon count ensures it's wonderfully quick. (3) And check out the goal celebrations.

At great cost, US Gold bought the rights to use the Olympic name for their new football sim and gave us *Olympic Soccer* (*PSM*8). Unfortunately the games-playing public at the time didn't buy the idea that soccer is an Olympic sport and so didn't buy *Olympic Soccer*. In a bid to re-launch it, Eidos (who bought US Gold) now offer us *Soccer '97* which has English sides instead of Olympic ones, but is basically the same game. The whole thing is a complete farce, really, the only upside being that few people will buy both versions by mistake because so few people bought *Olympic Soccer* in the first place.

But obviously the Olympic theme really didn't work because *Soccer '97* isn't all that bad. True, the original looked primitive, even when it was first released, and now its successor looks even more so, compared with its contemporaries. But *Soccer '97* still has a lot going for it. It has easy-to-access features and players you can jog around with in minutes. The gameplay is furious – much faster than the relatively sedate new-generation sims. And it seems like a return to the values of good old-fashioned British football; of quick, short passing, long balls played into space for strikers to charge on to, aimless balls hoofed into the area to create panic, shots pinging in from all angles, and penalty shoot-outs deciding matches on windy grounds with pitches like ice rinks... What more do you want? Alan Green?

You've got him. Yes, Greeny's still doing the commentary, of course – and he's still really annoying. After five minutes you feel like punching him, especially when you're five-nil down against Manchester United and he goes for the sixth time: 'Whack! That was terrific! Let's see that again...' And the recording quality of his voice is about as erratic as David James' goalkeeping: one moment he sounds like he's mumbling into his anorak, the next it's as if he's echoing in some large and empty stadium. Still, at least you can turn his commentary off.

If you were to use the perfect footballing analogy to sum up *Soccer '97* you might conclude that comparing it with *ISS Pro* is like comparing the Premiership with the Italian Series A: one being a blood-and-thunder, end-to-end scrap without much subtlety or finesse; the other a slower, technically superior, more beautiful game. The two could complement each other well in any respectable PlayStation library.

(1) Rock 'n' roll is here to stay. The players have excellent haircuts. Sadly, the refs are rather erratic – a quite realistic feature. (2) The keepers can be tough to beat, at times.

Alternatively...

ISS Pro	9/10	*PSM*19
Actua Soccer	9/10	*PSM*3
Adidas Power Soccer	8/10	*PSM*18
Olympic Soccer	7/10	*PSM*8
Soccer '97	6/10	*PSM*20

VERDICT

■ GRAPHICS:	Pre-Taylor report 6	■ GAMEPLAY:	End to end 8
■ SOUND:	Greeny's up your nose 6	■ PRESENTATION:	Lower division 6
■ LIFESPAN:	Decent reserve side 8	■ ORIGINALITY:	A re-staged fixture 0

Soccer '97's turn of pace makes it a football sim to watch, even though there are more classy players in the field. It's still the quickest on the PlayStation.

6 out of 10

TOP SECRET

Prepare for some extreme sport as we pull off spectacular stunts in Sony's *Cool Boarders*. Then warm up for the long-term challenge of *Victory Boxing*

COOL BOARDERS

You won't get anywhere in the overall rankings if you don't pull off some spectacular tricks on the designated ramps. Points can only be scored on the main ramps, which are usually located just after the checkpoints.

STUNTS

1 Different jump heights can be achieved depending on how long you hold down the X button. The longer you hold the button, the higher the jump. You can gain more height, though, by releasing the jump button as close to the edge of the ramp as possible. If you hit the ramp in exactly the right place and release the button at the correct time, you'll get a helpful height boost.

2 Use the shoulder buttons to fly around the base and take out the gun towers with your chain-gun. The captured agents are in the large huts, but make sure that all defences are taken out before going in for them. Make sure that you don't attack the friendlies as they escape the huts.

3 The spin is the next stunt and is, again, relatively easy to pull off. Hold Left or Right and the X button as you approach the ramp. As soon as you release X you'll jump and start to spin in the direction you're holding. You can perform a grab while spinning for extra points, but your main priority is to land as straight as possible. In tests we managed to pull off a 1260 (?) spin for well over 800 points

4 The stunts get harder now as you try to pull off backward and forward rolls. The points for these moves are high but so is the risk factor. To pull a roll off, hold back or forward together with the X button before the ramp. Once in the air, hold the direction to complete the roll and land. Two rolls can be achieved but only with maximum height. Again you can execute a grab while executing a roll but it will make the landing a lot harder.

5 Both rolls and spins can be adapted to become much more complex stunts using the diagonal directions on the joypad. These moves are called Mistys and are the highest-scoring stunts in the game. They are very hard to land, so try practising them on the first jump of the Novice course. This way you can keep re-starting for another attempt.

GENERAL ADVICE

1 Pulling off stunts all the way down the course is not advised as you'll only get scored for them at designated scoring areas. But if you're the sort of sad person who likes to impress their mates a lot, feel free to pull off as many moves as possible. Just don't expect to beat any high scores.

2 The Square button will make your board turn sharper than usual. This should only be used for tight corners as a sharp turn will slow you down or even spin you round into a 'fakie' stance. Try to keep your turning as smooth as possible, as best times will be achieved by keeping the straightest line down the mountain. You'll find that you can get up to some phenomenal speeds on the Advanced and Expert course. If the speed gets uncontrollable, use the Square button to make a quick, sharp turn to slow you down.

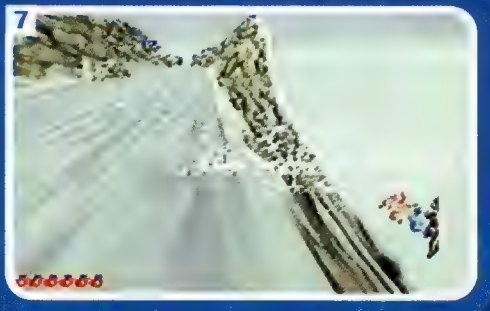
3 When playing against the ghost rider you may have problems in working out which boarder you're controlling, as the ghost rider will look exactly the same as you. This is especially annoying at the start, where to avoid this confusion you should immediately move to the left or right, out of the ghost's way.

4 Extra speed can be gained by the skilled rider in a number of different ways. The most obvious way to gain and keep speed is to stick to the centre of the corners and turn as little as possible. You can also use the dips and angles on the slopes to get extra speed, so learn whereabouts they are on each track. Finally, try going as high as possible on the banked corners then cutting down the slope to gain more momentum.

5 Dodging obstacles, such as trees and rocks, can cause you a few problems at first. If you take the correct line into the obstacles you don't have to use a sharp turn to get around them. However if you don't find the right line, you must use a sharp turn to get through without wiping out. Try to find the best line through the obstacles and stick to it as closely as possible.

6 There are often shortcuts littered around the courses which are usually harder to ride but will cut your time, if you get through in one piece. Keep an eye out for these shortcuts, but be careful – they can be pretty precarious.

7 On certain areas of each course you'll come across a cliff section where there are no rocks stopping you from plunging over the side. Keep as far away from the edge as possible but if you do start to slide out, don't use the sharp turn to stop you. It's usually best to ride it out on the edge as trying to turn sharp will make your board slip off the cliff.



VICTORY BOXING

Punch drunk? You will be, if you don't read our guide to *Victory Boxing: Champion Edition* before embarking on your boxing career...

TRAINING

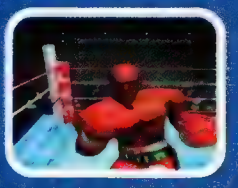
Before starting the fight proper, you should study carefully the information you have on your next opponent. If you know what style a boxer uses, you'll be able to predict the way he fights and the special attacks that he'll use. Foresight is a means of victory.

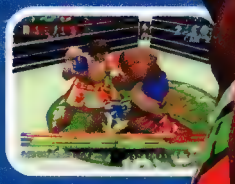
Once you have the low-down on your opponent it's time to set your training parameters. There are three utilities to use – the speed ball, the punch bag and the skipping rope. Each has its own advantages but using one utility too much will decrease the time you can use another. All the bars are inter-linked, so pushing one up will take the others down, which means you have to strike a balance between them.

The three appliances will affect your boxer's abilities as follows:

Speed ball: Punch and manoeuvring speed
Punch bag: Punch power
Skipping rope: Stamina

Stamina is by far the most important factor in winning a fight but you'll still need to work on the other two factors. When you design your new fighter always put their stamina on full ▶





Cheats

▶ and work the speed and power up in training. Being able to stay up for the whole fight is important but if you can't throw fast and powerful punches you'll never win on points, anyway.

POWER BARS

During the fight you have to keep your eye on the three power bars at the bottom of the screen. The top bar is the damage bar, the middle is punching power and the bottom is overall.

DAMAGE

When this reaches the bottom you will be knocked to the floor by your opponent's next punch. This bar will rebuild quickly but when you see it getting down to about 1/3 of its original length, move away from the other fighter and keep away until the bar is replenished.

POWER

This should be watched very carefully, as once the bar starts to get low your punches will not hurt your opponent. Every time you throw a punch the bar will go down a little so you'll need to stop and back off every now and again to allow your power to build up.

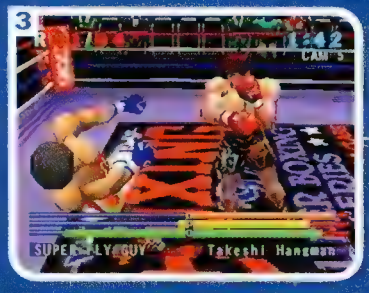
OVERALL

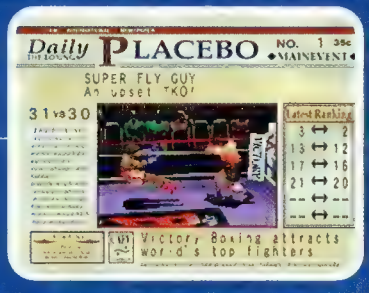
The damage meter determines knockdowns, whereas the overall bar determines knockouts. This bar will shorten as the other two refill so make sure that you always keep the other two as high as possible. To keep this bar up you should stay out of trouble and plan your attacks rather than going in with your arms and fists flying all over the ring.

1 You can get into an extremely bad situation if you don't use the power bars correctly. If you do go all-out in the first moments of a fight, you'll find the first two bars dropping to their lowest levels. This, in turn, will drop the overall meter down and the other two bars won't be able to replenish completely. This will stop you hitting at full power which means you'll have to throw more punches. Again, this will lower your overall bar. Once you have embarked on this cycle, you'll find it almost impossible to last the distance or win a fight.

2 The best way to avoid the above situation is to stay calm and think tactically. This isn't your average beat 'em up – *Victory Boxing* requires you to think. Of course there's call for some nifty joypad work but when it comes down to it, if you don't plan your moves and attacks, you won't win.

3 Getting knocked down is extremely frustrating. Getting knocked down three times in a round means game over. The Technical Knock-Out (TKO) is a very common way for a fight to end, so if it looks as though you're going to get knocked over for a third time in the round, keep away from your opponent until you hear that bell ringing.





4 Knocking your opponent down is extremely satisfying. If you see the other boxers' damage and punch bars low you should go in for the kill. Once you've knocked them down you should back away. Just as they get back to their feet, which is usually on the count of eight, go back in as hard as possible as their damage and punch bars should still be low.

5 As you progress through the rankings your trainer will show you some snazzy new moves. Some of these moves can be devastating to the guy who receives them. Miss your target, however, and you'll find your power bar dropping drastically. You'll be tempted to fit your fighting technique around each move, but doing this will put you off your stride and destroy your tactics. Try to fit each move into your already developed style as this will just enhance your technique and make you a better boxer.

6 In the ring you'll need to use your arsenal of defensive moves regularly. The most basic is the block. This can be used to cover the face and the body and you will need to pre-empt where your opponent will throw his/her next punch. You will still take a little damage when you have your block up but if your opponent lays into you, they'll have to stop to get their power back up, which is when you should strike.

7 Ducking and diving is an essential part of winning a fight in *Victory Boxing*. You should use these moves in conjunction with follow-up attacks. For instance, if you duck an opponent's punch you should come straight back with a flurry of blows.

8 To beat some of the stronger fighters you'll need to keep on the move. Wear them down with lots of jabs and hooks but make sure that you pull away quickly. When their overall bar is looking low you should finish them off with a flurry of big powerful punches.

9 Jabbing and hooking is also a good way of earning points if the match goes the full length. If your opponent does seem to be extremely hard, you're probably best to try and take the bout to its end rather than going in for the knockout punch.

10 Every now and again you'll be given the opportunity to do some sparring. This is a good time to practise some of your special moves as the outcome of the match isn't important.

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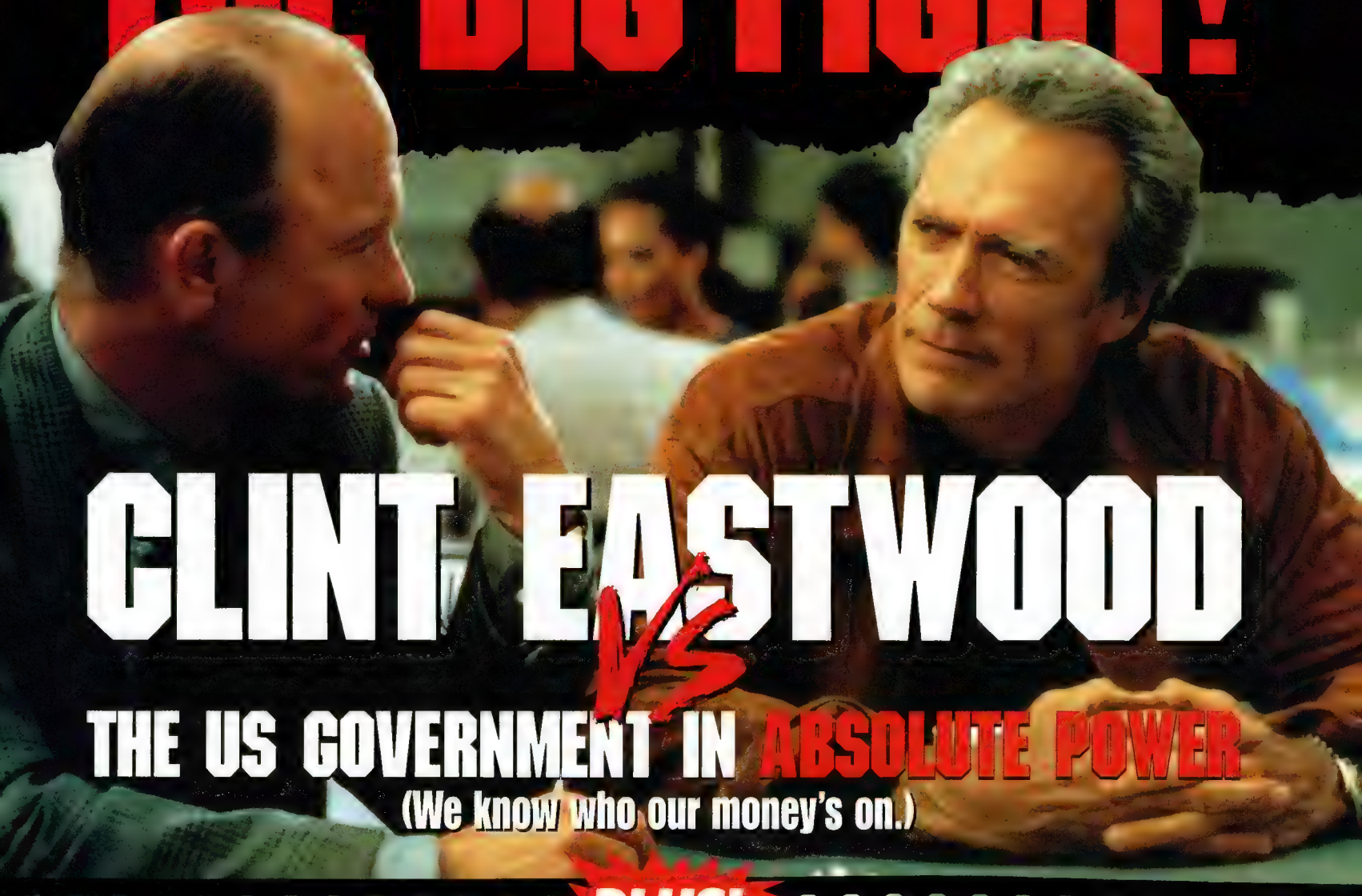

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It's all in Total Film 5. On sale Thursday 8 May.

Experience the massively playable *MMV3*, hack across country in *Monster Trucks*, take a Speedster for a spin along *Porsche*'s USA track; then there's a whole level of *Excalibur 2555AD* to play through...

Micro Machines V3

■ PUBLISHER: Codemasters
■ STYLE: Racing game
■ PROGRAM: Playable demo

Micro Machines V3 is every inch a multiplayer experience. To reflect this, the demo features a two-player race only, so have that spare pad and a mate handy. In-demo options include the ability to switch weapons on or off, then race on one of two courses. Chemical Warfare is an hilarious tank level, while Splash 'n' Dash puts you in control of both the chunky-tyred monster-truck thingies plus the highly-manoeuvrable speedboats. And if you're still craving more after that, following on from the playable bit is a rolling demo which shows you a smart selection of the other tracks, vehicles and weapons that you'll experience, should you buy the final version.

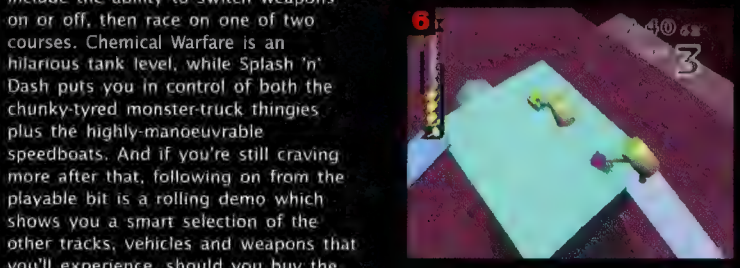
■ Controls

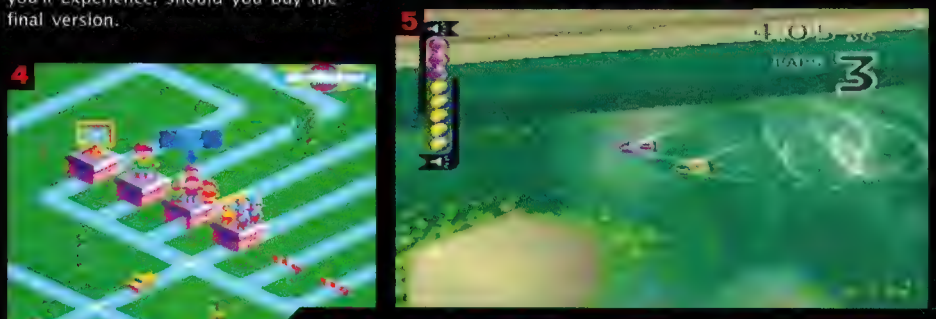
↑	Not used
↓	Not used
←	Turn left
→	Turn right
○	Accelerate
✕	Reverse
□	Horn/Fire weapon
△	Jump
L1	Jump
L2	Not used
R1	Jump
R2	Horn
START	Pause
SELECT	Not used

■ Additional features
In the full version of the game there are a startling 26 courses available right from the start as well as other bonus courses. Many races also have imaginative set pieces – such as being challenged to climb a slippy-slidey sandcastle. Add to this the masses of vehicles at your disposal, plus six different weapons to spice up the action, and you have a top racer here.

■ Further information
Micro Machines V3 was reviewed in issue 18 and earned itself nine out of ten, plus a StarPlayer accolade.

Don't worry!
These programs are pre-production versions of finished games. If they crash or bug-out, simply reset your PlayStation and reload.

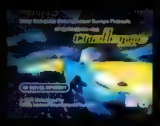




[1] Marvel at the sight of giant Bunsen burners in the game's creative set pieces. [2] Choose from one of two splendid, playable levels. [3] The boats are particularly zippy. And the missiles are a hoot. [4] The demo features only a two-player game. [5] Admire the lovely water effects. [6] The huge mallets are the best weapons ever. [7] Watch a rolling demo too.

Porsche Challenge

■ PUBLISHER: SCEE
■ STYLE: Racing game
■ PROGRAM: Playable demo



Get a taster of the superb graphics and the realistic car handling.

This superb racer takes a bit of time to get into, but once you do it's one of the most rewarding you'll play. The demo features a single-player game in a race across the long USA track. Within this you get to choose between Rachel and Beats – two of the game's drivers – you can play in arcade or simulation mode on one of three different skill levels, and you can also choose automatic or Tiptronic transmission. And you can select whether to race over one, two, three, four, five, ten or 15 laps. Terrific stuff.

■ Controls

- ↑ Horn
- ↓ Rear view
- ← Turn left
- → Turn right
- Accelerate
- Brake
- Handbrake
- Not used
- L Outside view
- L Inside view
- R Change up gear
- R Change down gear
- START Pause
- SELECT In-game options

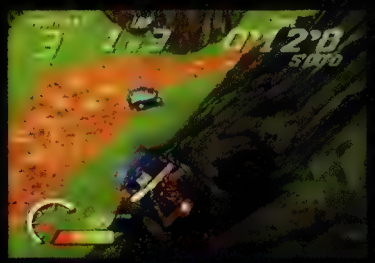
■ Additional features
The full game offers six drivers plus the Test Driver who can be selected once you've won all the races. There are also four large courses with normal, long and mirror versions of each.

■ Further information
The game scored 8/10 in *PSM*19.

Monster Trucks

■ PUBLISHER: Psygnosis
■ STYLE: Racing game
■ PROGRAM: Playable demo

Not the longest demo in the world, but what the single course included lacks in size, the full demo experience more than makes up for in informative content. Once it's loaded up you get to drive around a single, volcanic level with more twists, turns and undulations than a rollercoaster. You also get to fiddle around with the views and get a handle on fast steering. There's also a decent amount of opponents to keep the challenge up. Once you've played the level, you can take a look at the rolling demo section which gives you a sneak look at the ice course, followed by still frames of various other courses, along with details of the content of the full version of the game.



■ Controls

- ↑ Not used
- ↓ Not used
- ← Move left
- → Move right
- Accelerate
- Brake
- Horn
- Not used
- L Change view
- L Fast steer left
- R Change view
- R Fast steer right
- START Not used
- SELECT Quit

■ Additional features
The full game contains no fewer than eight enormous courses, and offers a choice of nine different trucks and characters. Plus, of course, there's the Car Crushing section to add yet more value.

■ Further information
Monster Trucks was reviewed in issue 17 and scored 6/10.

Excalibur 2555AD

■ PUBLISHER: Telstar
■ STYLE: 3D adventure
■ PROGRAM: Playable demo

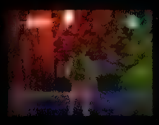
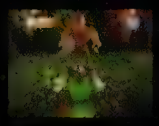
It's not quite *Tomb Raider*, we'll admit, but *Excalibur 2555AD* is certain to appeal to a whole swathe of adventurers out there, especially when they get a look at this larger-than-you-might-expect demo. You get the whole of the Ort Underworld level to play through, which includes many locations, a sprinkling of enemies to fight and more than enough minor puzzles to keep you occupied. In fact, almost every aspect of the final game – combat, using objects, and so on – is covered to some degree, so you'll get a real feel of how the final game works.

■ Controls

- ↑ Move forward
- ↓ Move backward
- ← Turn left
- → Turn right
- Talk/pick up/block
- Run/inventory control
- Side slash/use object/select object
- Downward slash
- L Not used
- L Change view
- R Combat/normal mode
- R Combat/normal mode
- START Pause
- SELECT Inventory

■ Additional features
In the full version you get 13 sprawling levels, taking you through a number of bizarre locations and becoming increasingly complex as you progress.

■ Further information
Excalibur 2555AD scored seven out of ten in issue 18 of *PSM*.

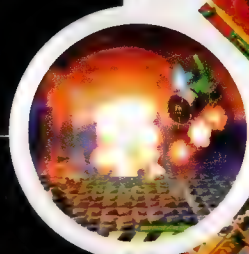
***Excalibur 2555AD*'s graphics are moody and the close combat adds another level of excitement.**

Next Month

NEXT - MONTH CD

Rage Racer

Speedster



Agent Armstrong

Little Big Adventure

Four playable demonstrations, headed by the long-awaited *Rage Racer*. Try out Namco's latest addition for yourself and see whether you agree with the conclusions we reach in our review of the game.

The Readers' Top 50

The votes have been cast, the tuxedos hired and the speeches prepared, as we unveil your choice of the best PlayStation game ever. And the 49 runners-up that you chose!

The Unofficial Playstation Forum

Leading industry programmers are brought together for the first time to discuss their hopes and fears for the PlayStation's future

Race against time

With the release, finally, of *Rage Racer*, we detail the complete history of the racing game and name the best on the PlayStation

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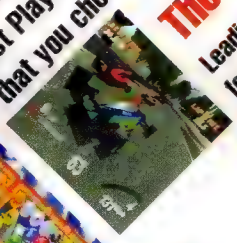

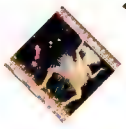

OFFICIAL QUESTIONING

Dave Perry, ex-Games Animal, has swapped attitude and bandanna for a marketing gig with THQ. This issue he talks us through his company's PlayStation wares and tells how he REALLY got on with Dominik Diamond

D A V E P E R R Y

So, the moniker 'Games Animal' – what was that all about, then? Do you regret that games jingoism and bandanna-wearing business?
Not at all. I had a great time – limo rides with Dani Behr, kissing Daniella Westbrook on prime time TV, opening stores all over the country, and competing against some of the UK's finest games players. At one point I was on TV three nights a week and *The Independent* even dedicated a five-page feature to me. Unfortunately a lot of jealousy arose from all this attention and many of my contemporaries took it all too seriously. I became the Chris Eubank of the games industry. Some people loved it, some hated it, but now in my new role a lot of those people are finally getting to meet the real me.

How about *GamesMaster*? We hear that you and Dominik Diamond weren't the best of chums.
Personally, I believe Dominik owes the games industry a huge debt of gratitude for his position, but sadly his ego probably won't allow him to admit it. It's no secret that we hate each other. At the end of filming the last series of *GamesMaster* we fell out in a big way. I was delighted when I heard he was finally leaving the show to supposedly prove he is 'the best presenter in Britain' (his words). Hopefully that'll be the last we see of him. Good riddance.

Despite that exaggerated persona, you are a massive games fan, aren't you?
I live and breathe games. Whenever I move into a new house I always ensure that there's an extra room which I can dedicate to gaming. I have every games machine wired up to a monitor and a 100-watt amplification system to ensure optimum playing pleasure. Drives the neighbours mad! I wasn't a great fan of the Spectrum/C64 days, although I did own a Speccy. I was more of a 'bunk off school' arcade player. I finally got into it all professionally with the arrival of the Amiga, though. Ah, happy days...

What's the first game you became addicted to?
The first title I really couldn't stop playing was *Asteroids* in the arcades – an expensive addiction for a 13 year-old. Later on it was *Elite* on the BBC Micro, and *Drakken* on the Amiga.

What are your favourite ever games?
My all-time top 10 is pretty Amiga-heavy. It would have to include *Player Manager* and *Kick Off 2* from Anco, *Dragon's Breath* from Palace and *Muds* from Rainbow Arts. From the 16-bit days I was inseparable from my *Super StreetFighter* and *NHL '97* carts for the Mega Drive, while *Mario Kart* and *Super Bomberman* would make it on the SNES. *Space Hulk*, *Wipeout 2097*, *ISS Pro* and *WCW Vs The World* would be my PlayStation inclusions at the moment.

Which of these THQ games do you rate as the pick of the bunch: *WCW Versus The World*, *K1 Arena Fighter*, *Air Race* (see Primal Screen, p8) or *Tokyo Highway Battle*?
The two I keep returning to play out of work hours are *WCW Vs The World* and *Air Race*. Both are so playable – *WCW* for its sheer depth and superb gameplay, *Air Race* for its white-knuckle speed and breathtaking graphics.

Surely wrestling games will never really take off properly on the PlayStation?
Wrestling games on the whole tend to struggle in this country, but that's usually because the majority of them have been crap. *WCW Vs The World* is an exception to that rule. It's undoubtedly the greatest wrestling game ever on home console. Sixty wrestlers in all, 30-40 moves per wrestler and running at 60fps, this is a great fighting sim that I'd challenge any games player not to enjoy.

We were impressed with *Air Race*. What are your hopes for that?
Sky high. I've only just started showing this title around, and everywhere I take it people are stunned. The speed of the game, the visuals and the originality of having a *Ridge Racer*-quality racing game, featuring an assortment of aircraft instead of sports cars, seems to have captured everybody's imagination. It's going to be massive – undoubtedly THQ's biggest PlayStation hit to date.

'I live and breathe games... I have every games machine wired up to a monitor and a 100-watt amplification system to ensure optimum playing pleasure. Drives the neighbours mad!'

What other games on the PlayStation have you been impressed with so far? What do you think of the current gaming scene?
No games collection would be complete without *ISS Pro*, *Wipeout 2097*, *Tomb Raider*, *Resident Evil*, *Tekken 2* and *Die Hard Trilogy*. It's tough to be original when you're talking about games of this quality. The current videogames scene excites me. It seems that there's a genuine buzz surrounding the industry again – largely due to Sony. However I do wonder if there isn't a little too much 'cloning' going on. I think the PlayStation's make-up makes it far too easy to utilise the same effects over and over again. It's very rare that you see a totally new effect in a game, these days, or indeed a totally new game. Still, I guess it's this that has made the format easy to develop for. It's swings and roundabouts, isn't it? Maybe the arrival of the home development kit and the N64 will make everyone pull their socks up in the creativity department.

Anything you'd like to see happening in the future on the console?
I'd like to see Sony helping everybody to reduce the price of software, rather than just concentrating on their own titles. I was delighted with the new low-priced console, but I can't get excited about the lower prices of official Sony titles while everyone else is forced to leave their prices at the same level. It only makes it harder for third-party developers to sell their games. Less sales equals less development. Less development will mean less variety. Less variety translates to less choice for the consumer. If Sony would reduce the costs for all of their developers across the board so they could bring down their RRPs in line with their own games, the PlayStation owner would really have something to crow about.

And are you happy in your new role, or do you long to get back into games journalism?
I'm happy as long as I am working with high-quality games. Thankfully the present portfolio of titles I am working with for THQ are superb. I think they'll establish us as one of the leading PlayStation publishing houses in Europe. I do miss working on magazines, but if I ever returned to journalism it'd have to be on my own terms and I'd need complete autonomy to use all of my experience on both sides of the games fence to create the ultimate games publication. I don't think there's a publisher in the country brave enough to give me that!

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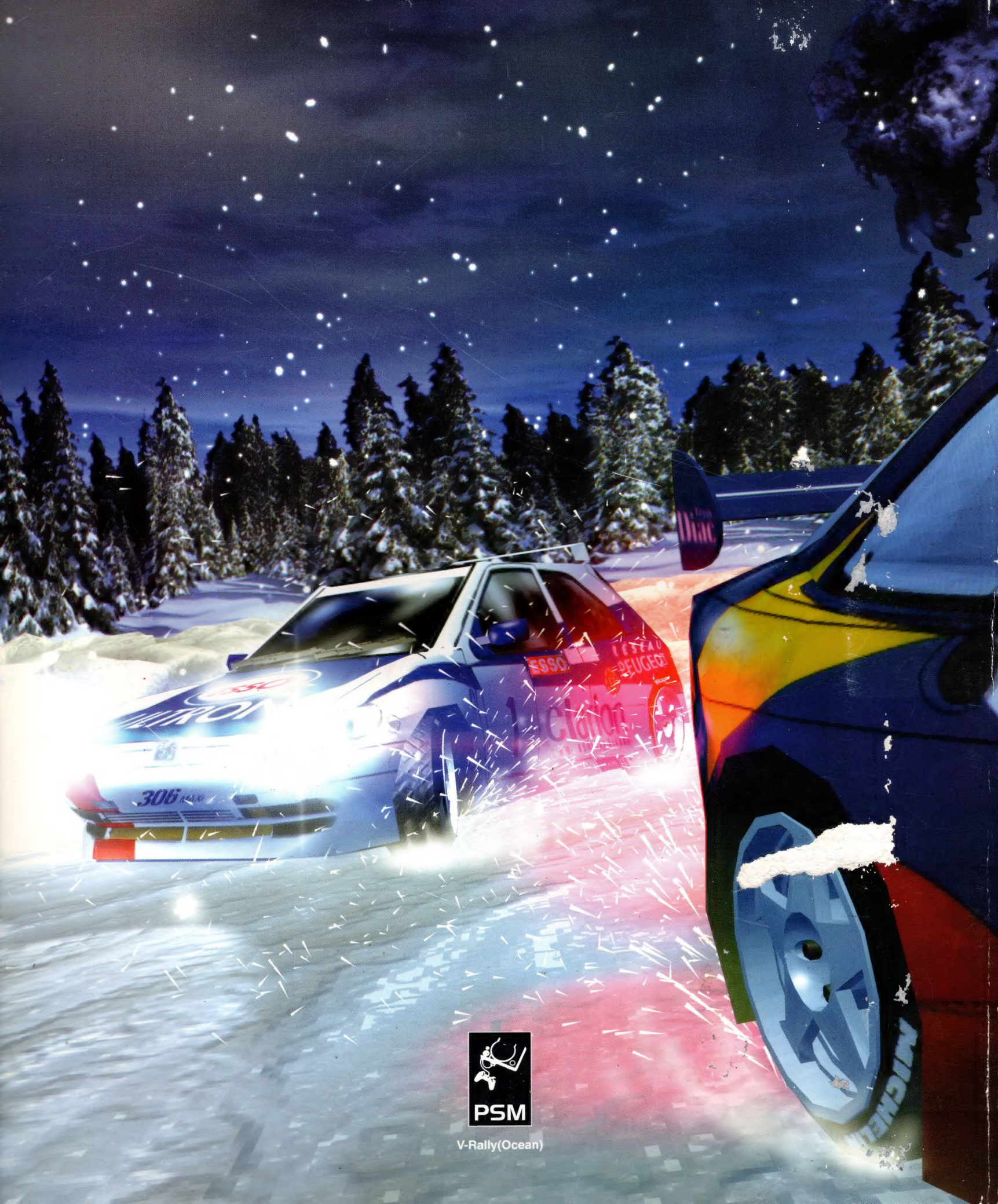

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